# Film Quarterly

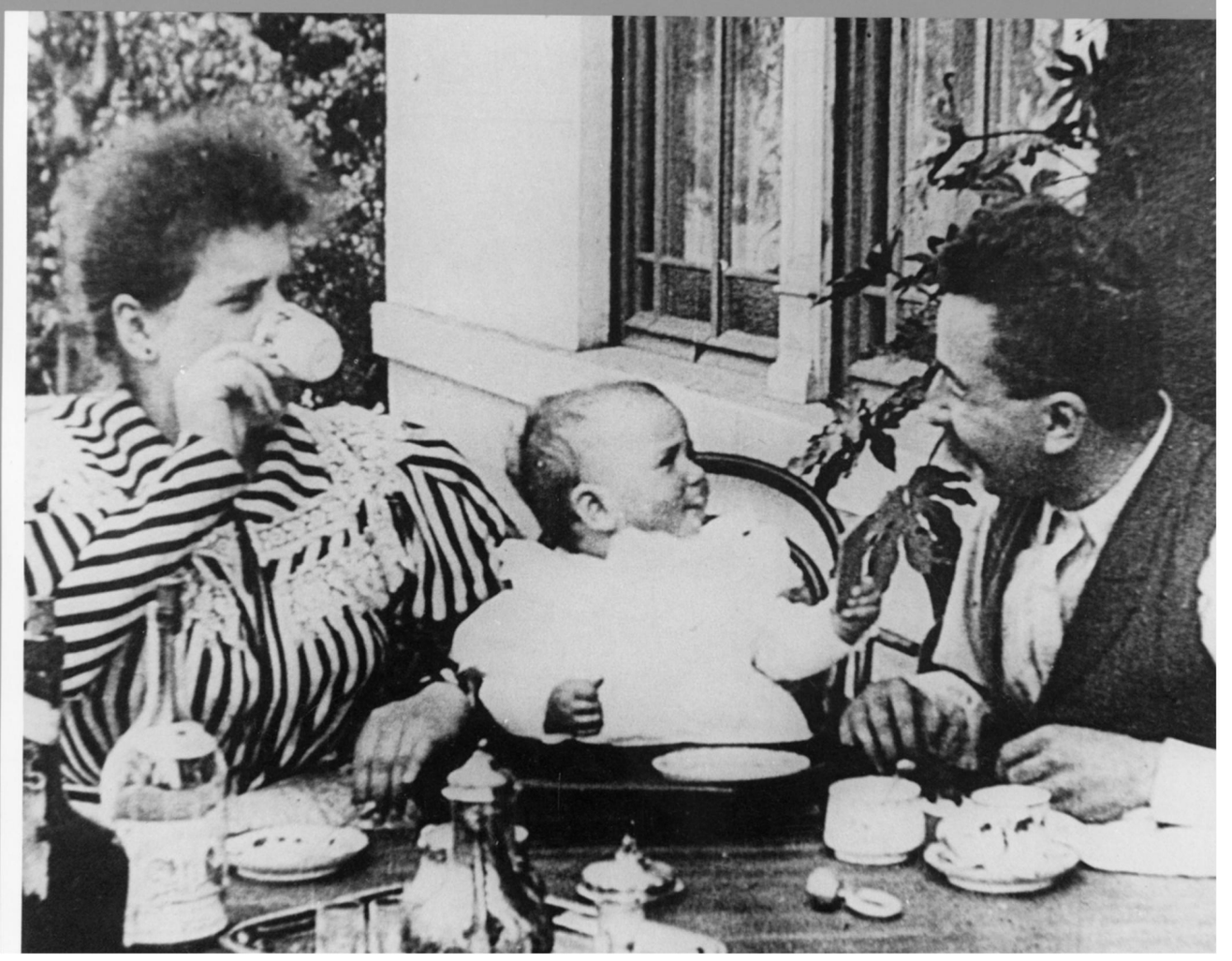
Volume 46
Number 2
Winter 1992–93

Desire Under the Firs in "Twin Peaks" •

D.W. Griffith: Father of the Woman's Film •

When Less Is Less—The Long Take •

Mastroianni—Truth or Dare • *The Player* •



$5.00

7 25274 74075 8 24

WISCONSIN
studies in film

## Settling the Score

Music and the Classical Hollywood Film

**Kathryn Kalinak**

Kalinak draws on archival material to examine the conventions and strategies underpinning film scoring in Hollywood, investigating the most influential relationship to have evolved between music and film: the Classical Hollywood model. "Most books on Hollywood film scores have been either popularly oriented or have concentrated on the careers of individual composers. To a considerable extent this has been true because few scholars in the field of cinema studies have had enough musical training to follow sophisticated analysis. Kalinak tackles this problem forthrightly, outlining musical concepts in a readily understandable way."—Kristin Thompson, Series Editor, *Wisconsin Studies in Film*

Cloth $45.50 Paper $17.95

Other Volumes in the Series . . .

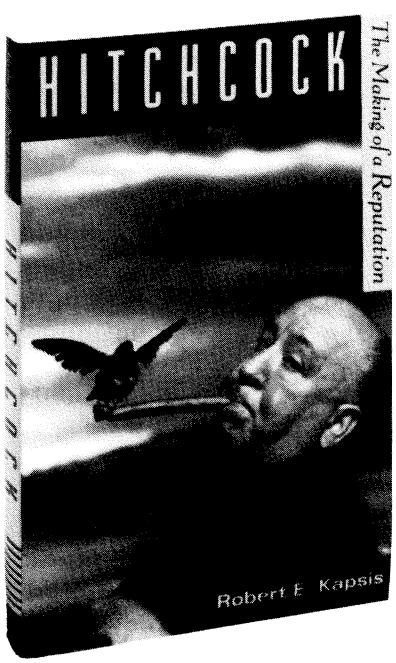
**The Wages of Sin**
Censorship and the Fallen Woman Film, 1928 – 1942
**Lea Jacobs**
Cloth $37.50 Paper $14.95

**Shared Pleasures**
A History of Movie Presentation in the United States
**Douglas Gomery**
**With a foreword by David Bordwell**
Cloth $40.00 Paper $15.95

**Patterns of Time**
Mizoguchi and the 1930s
**Donald Kirihara**
Cloth $50.00 Paper $24.95

Wisconsin
The University of Wisconsin Press
114 N. Murray St., Madison, WI 53715-1199
MC & VISA (608) 262-8782 • FAX 262-7560

**"Required reading for Hitchcock scholars..."***




"Scrupulously researched, invaluable material for those who continue to ask: what made the master tick?" —Anthony Perkins*

# HITCHCOCK

*The Making of a Reputation*

**Robert E. Kapsis**

Kapsis reveals the forces behind Alfred Hitchcock's changing critical fortunes, and shows how Hitchcock's legacy and reputation shed light on the way reputations of contemporary directors are made.

"A significant contribution to film scholarship."—Andrew Sarris, former film critic, *Village Voice* and professor of film, Columbia University

**Paper $16.95 314 pages, 40 halftones**
**Library cloth edition $45.00**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
5801 S. ELLIS AVE., CHICAGO, IL 60637

Volume 46
Number 2
Winter 1992–93

# Film Quarterly

Editor
Ann Martin

Book Review Editor
Stephen Prince

New York Editor
William Johnson

Los Angeles Editor
Michael Dempsey

London Editor
Edward Buscombe

Rome Editor
Gideon Bachmann

Editorial Board
Leo Braudy
Ernest Callenbach
Andries Deinum
Brian Henderson
Albert Johnson
Marsha Kinder
Linda Williams

Indexed in
Access
Art Index
Arts and Humanities
Citation Index
Book Review Index
Film Literature Index
Humanities Index
Index to Critical Film Reviews
International Index
to Film Periodicals
MLA Directory of Periodicals
Readers' Guide to
Periodical Literature

Printed in USA

Type
TechType
Richmond, CA

Printing
Malloy Lithographing
Ann Arbor, MI

Gideon Bachmann
Marcello Mastroianni and the Game of Truth 2

Scott Simmon
"The Female of the Species": D.W. Griffith as Father of the Woman's Film 8

Martha Nochimson
"Twin Peaks": Desire Under the Douglas Firs 22

David MacDougall
When Less Is Less—The Long Take in Documentary 36

REVIEW

Ray Sawhill
*The Player* 47

BOOK REVIEWS

*Interpreting Films* 51 *The Stars Appear* 52 *Frank Capra* 52 *Jean Renoir* 54 *Shared Pleasures* 55 *Stardom* 56 *Making Visible the Invisible* 56 *Men, Women, and Chain Saws* 58
Book Notes 60

Cover: (top) Greta Scacchi in Robert Altman's *The Player* (see page 47); (bottom) The Lumière brothers' *Feeding the Baby* (*Le Repas de Bébé,* 1895) (see page 36).

**Film Quarterly** (ISSN 0015-1386) is published quarterly by the University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94720. Second class postage paid at Berkeley, California, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian GST #R122058662. POSTMASTER: send address changes to Film Quarterly, University of California Press, Berkeley, California 94720.

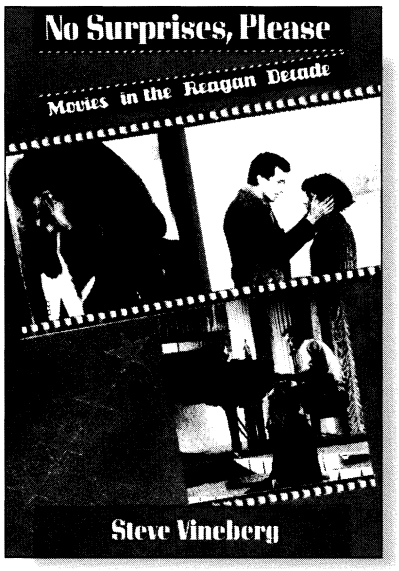
Subscriptions are $19 per year for individuals, $40 per year for institutions. Subscribers outside the U.S, add $6 for postage. Single issues are $5 for individuals, $10.50 for institutions. Domestic claims for nonreceipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed.

Subscription requests and requests for advertising rate cards should be sent to the Journals Department, manuscript enquiries to the Editor, Film Quarterly, at the University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94720. Unsolicited manuscripts should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1994. ∞

Back issues subsequent to Volume 18 (1965-66) write to the University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94720. © 1992 by the Regents of the University of California.

*New from* ***Schirmer Books—***




# No Surprises, Please

## Movies in the Reagan Decade

By STEVE VINEBERG

Award-winning author Steve Vineberg exposes the most successful movies of the '80s as manipulative, empty, and reflective of our fragmented political culture. *No Surprises, Please* will anger true believers in all camps, intrigue those dissatisfied with the mainstream, and change the way we see movies forever. For example:

"Do the Right Thing *is carefully layered so that it gives off different sets of signals to white and black audiences.*"

"Born on the Fourth of July *is a 24-carat fake....This alleged condemnation of the kind of thinking that sends American men proudly off to war is as thorough a demonstration of machismo nonsense as I've ever seen.*"

Vineberg is at his best when discussing the unreleased director's cut of Jonathan Demme's *Swing Shift*, the film in which Goldie Hawn usurped creative control from Demme. "*Demme asked* [Hawn] *to play a woman who sleeps with two men and likes it....And she did it. But then she got scared and threw the performance away....Her performance in the unreleased version is easily the finest work of her career.*"

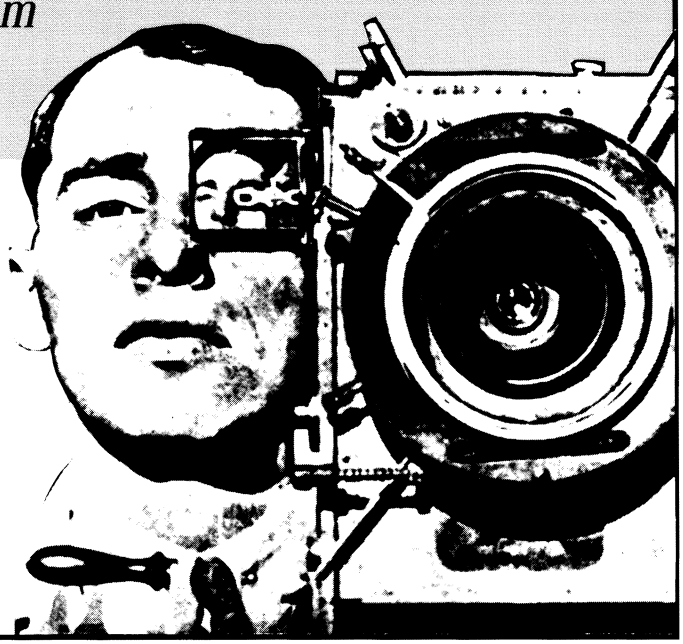
*352 pages, 25 photographs, videography*
*ISBN 0-02-872686-3• $28.00*

***"Vineberg is a voice to reckon with in film criticism."***
—Library Journal, October 15, 1992

To order, or for more information, contact:
**SCHIRMER BOOKS/**Macmillan Publishing Company
866 THIRD AVENUE • NEW YORK, NY 10022 • ATT: DAVE HORVATH
***Or call toll-free (800) 323-7445 and have your credit card handy!***

# documentary

*a history of the non-fiction film*
SECOND REVISED EDITION
**ERIK BARNOUW**



Now brought completely up to date, the new edition of this classic work on documentary films and filmmaking surveys the history of the genre from Louis Lumière's first effort to such recent landmark productions as *Shoah* and the Ken Burns *Civil War* series.

**"A helpful antidote to the spirit....**
Barnouw's style has a clarity and precision that make his books delights to read."
—*Film Quarterly*, on the previous edition

400 pp.; paper $10.95

**OXFORD PAPERBACKS**
200 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

**Leo Finlay, Borroloola, N.T.**
*"White people don't understand that there are two laws and two different kinds of custom in Australia... White people have different laws from Aboriginal people"*

**Faye Ginsburg, New York University.**
*"A brilliant film. A watershed work which forshadowed new directions in ethnographic documentary."*

**Meaghan Morris, Financial Review (Sydney, Australia).**
*"Long, complex, pleasurable and innovative, Two Laws is practically unclassifiable within the conventional slots which are so much taken for granted in European cinema."*

Available from: Carolyn Strachan 135 Hudson St.#1F, New York, NY 10013
Telephone 212 925 1500 Fax 212 925 1501


WHAT MADE PISTACHIO NUTS?
**EARLY SOUND COMEDY AND THE VAUDEVILLE AESTHETIC**
*Henry Jenkins*
W.C. Fields, Wheeler & Woolsey, Eddie Cantor, Burns & Allen. *Duck Soup, Diplomaniacs, Hollywood Party.* They take center stage in this study of the comedy-centered films of the early 1930s. Jenkins shows how such comedies reflect Hollywood's attempt to merge vaudeville with classical film narrative.
**384 pp., 150 photos, $35.00**

***A new preface by the author brings this work up to date.***
REFLEXIVITY IN FILM AND LITERATURE
**FROM DON QUIXOTE TO JEAN-LUC GODARD**
*Robert Stam*
**"Stam is an intellectual omnivore, and his writing is a highly stimulating blend of social, psychological, and aesthetic concerns."**
*—FILM QUARTERLY*
**320 pp., 55 movie stills $14.50 paper, Back in print!**

MODERNIST MONTAGE
**THE OBSCURITY OF VISION IN CINEMA AND LITERATURE**
*P. Adams Sitney*
**"[Sitney] demonstrates his considerable erudition and skill as an explicator of difficult modernist texts....informed by a knowledge and appreciation of film in general and avant-garde film in particular,...[his] insights are new and intriguing."**
*—FILM QUARTERLY*
**250 pp., $16.50 Now a paperback!**

CINEMA AND FICTION
**NEW MODES OF ADAPTING 1950-1990**
*Edited by*
*Colin Nicholson and John Orr*
The editors look at issues of literary adaptation as well as specific texts in their analysis of film adaptations of well-known novels over the last forty years. Works discussed include: *The Shining, Empire of the Sun, The Year of Living Dangerously,* and *To Kill a Mockingbird.*
**240 pp., $55.00**
EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY PRESS

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS
**Dept. S96**
**136 South Broadway**
**Irvington, NY 10533**
**To order, call or fax.**
**Credit cards accepted.**
**Tel: (800) 944-UNIV**
**Fax: (800) 944-1844**

film school

*Gideon Bachmann*

# Marcello Mastroianni and The Game of Truth

I first met Marcello Mastroianni in 1962 on the set of the film *8 ½*, by Federico Fellini. I had gone to Rome from New York to take some pictures for *Life* magazine of Fellini at work, and had come out to the shooting location on the beach near Ostia loaded down with cameras and good intentions. But it rained all day, and no shooting took place. Five of us huddled in the damp cold under a makeshift lean-to that the crew had erected: Fellini, Anouk Aimée, the cameraman Gianni di Venanzo, myself, and—Marcello. It was he who suggested that to wile away the time we play the famous Italian *giuoco della verità*—the game of truth, where each one in turn has to give an absolutely truthful answer to an embarrassing question. And it was Fellini who, in typically impish form, had suggested the question: How many members of the opposite sex had any one of us been to bed with in a single day?

But Mastroianni objected and suggested that the question be rephrased. "Two women in a single day," he said, "is normal. The wife and the mistress. The question should be: How many beyond two?" But he didn't win the game: It was Gianni who had made it to five. (And we were cheated out of Anouk's answer because it stopped raining just in time.)

There was an embarrassing silence when Gianni made his claim, but it was Marcello who laughed and broke the spell. Nobody thought of lying; like little boys we were all proud of the truth. And to this day, although I have now known him for 30 years, I still think Mastroianni has never lied to me.

What follows is the gist of another huddle on another rainy day. During the shooting of his latest film in Paris, *Tchin Tchin*, with Julie Andrews (based on the well-known play of the same name by François Billetdoux and directed by Gene Saks), bad weather caused us to seek refuge in an old synagogue in the Jewish quarter of the Marais in Paris, and here, wrapped in a blanket and between endless cigarettes that he can't stop smoking, Marcello Mastroianni and I played the game of truth again. He told me his story.

Marcello Mastroianni in *La Notte* (1961)

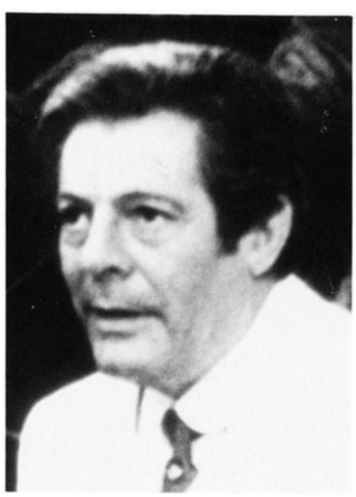
I don't really know what keeps me going. Sometimes I am astonished myself that I'm still here making films at my age, as if I was at the beginning of my career. But it's now 40 years that I've been doing this. Maybe I've not paid enough attention to what I have been doing; in any case, I haven't lived a very calculated life. You might even say that I haven't behaved in a very professional way. I never confronted my work—cinema and theater—like a real craftsman. I usually throw myself into a new film like into an adventure: because I like the director, because I want to take a trip to the place where the film is being made, abroad or at least away from Rome, because I feel optimistic, and because, after all, it's all a game.

The important thing is to know what season of your life you are living, and not to try and be something on the screen which is ridiculous. To be conscious of the time, of your image . . . but that doesn't mean that you have to calculate ahead and steer your life and career like an accountant.

I began to realise this when my acting life changed after making *La Dolce Vita* with Fellini. Before that I had played innocuous roles, pleasant comedies, in which I was the happy boy from next door, or the taxi driver, all those comedies with Sophia Loren. But *La Dolce Vita* opened up a much wider professional horizon for me. I got to play parts like the one in Antonioni's *La Notte*, characters with greater diversity, less similar to each other, less typecast. In *Il bell'Antonio* I played an impotent man and then in *Divorzio all'italiana* the opposite, the Baron of Cefalu, who is a real criminal, an exploiter, with very different sexual particularities.

But I didn't plan my progress. Having had a background in theater before coming to the cinema—ten years with Visconti and his theater troupe—I felt a need for diversity, to play ever new types of characters, even in the cinema. I wanted to be like a chameleon, always changing my color, to enter into new skins, new faces. And that, in the cinema, is not easy, because your physical characteristics are seen so clearly by the camera, and the audience begins to recognise you under the skin of the new *personage*. You can only change your hair color so often, or have a mustache or a beard so many times, in the end the character is in something that is not physical, the change has to occur *inside* you.

For example, I could never have played parts like John Wayne or Gary Cooper or Clark Gable . . . I would look ridiculous on a horse! In the end I found that people liked me not because I was this or that character, but because it had a certain part of me. John Waynes are loved because they represent a certain type of hero, never changing costume or horse—that wasn't my type of acting. Nevertheless, I wanted to be loved by the public, that's in the veins of an actor, and of course it's an economic necessity.



Maybe that is the only planning I ever did: not to take on parts that were outside of my ability, both physical and psychological. I was always aware of the fact that my appearance on a screen would not, in itself, nail the spectator to his seat like the appearance of a Clark Gable. So I decided I had to find other ways of holding his attention. What those actors achieved by always being the same kind of hero, I did by always changing. As it happens, that fits my nature: I love to change, to be different from moment to moment. Changing helped me overcome the problem of not having a strong personality. In the end, the public liked my many faces, although often they pretend (and the producers support them in this view) that they would like to see the same thing again and again. In a way, I won my battle. I've played everything: a pregnant man, a homosexual, a whole series of impotent characters, a man who could get excited in love only under conditions of extreme danger, all roles diametrically opposed to this label that has been affixed to me, this "Latin Lover" nonsense—a part, by the way, which I have never played.

In Fellini's films I'm always a slightly confused intellectual, full of infantile sexual fantasies. In the films with Sophia Loren I'm always the victim, in the end. But I always accepted roles because they were a new challenge, even when the whole enterprise seemed not very secure, sometimes even with directors of no proven ability. In fact my filmography does not consist only of successes, there are plenty of so-so works. Altogether, I think I've made about 140 films. My mother, when she was alive, used to keep count, but now I can only estimate the number. And then there were all the ones in the beginning of my career, when I was not featured, so there must be more in all. A few days on a set here, a few days there, then a week, and slowly growing into more important parts, and that's when she started counting. . . .

I remember once playing Donizzetti in a film in period costume, and she saw me playing the piano. Of course it wasn't me who was playing, but she was a simple woman and she was very proud of her son who had conquered the difficult instrument so quickly. . . . She may not have thought I actually played it, but the image pleased her, the costume, her son in such a respected part. She said to me, "Stop making those films where you are wearing rags!" I come from a very modest family, and for my mother it was an event to see me in evening dress. And to satisfy everybody's curiosity, here is a secret revealed: I was born in 1924 in Fontana Liri, half-way between Rome and Naples. So now I'm 65 years old and here I find myself working exactly like I did when I was 30. I must be crazy.

And in all this time I've never played a hero in the traditional sense, rather parts in which the complications of life, its drudgery, its pitfalls, are accepted with compassion and simplicity. I don't want to sound pretentious, but I actually prefer characters with certain limits, with weaknesses, not winners. That corresponds more to my own character, I'm not

a winner in real life. Heroes actually put me off. I feel, somehow, that they are irresponsible. Even the saints put me off. I mean, how can a human being be so exceptional? Does that mean that I, in comparison, am a shit? Or maybe I'm just envious. . . .

Anyway, real people are much more ambiguous, much more complicated than the saints and the John Waynes of this world. I wish we could straighten everything out with a sharpshooter or a fist . . . ridiculous. But these are elements of cinema language. Except that I couldn't use them. On me you'd soon see how ridiculous those postures are.

Again, I don't want to blow my own trumpet, but in some small way I think my way of showing that in simplicity and humanity there are answers is also useful to the people who see the films I've made, at least I hope so. I try to be more patient, more philosophical about life, a sort of street philosophy, a three-penny philosophy, pulling down the icons. I mean, let's not make such a fuss about everything. For example, I don't lose any sleep over a film I do badly.

In the end, all is useful. As we say in Italian: "tutto fa brodo"—everything makes soup.

Nevertheless, as the years pass, I find that my choices become more precise. I have continually refused to participate in those major films, these American monster projects, these international blockbusters, which are occasionally offered to me. All my friends told me I was mad, refusing big films and accepting small, intimate films—films which were clearly destined to make little or no money at the box office. Sometimes dangerous films, but somehow I feel proud about them. The film I made in Greece with Theo Angelopoulos clearly wasn't made for a large public.

The only really "big" films I've agreed to make were the ones with Fellini, but these big films have a lot more content, more weight. But I like the ones with small casts, small crews, made with a few friends, an enterprise like an adventure, not counting the outcome, made for the fun of making them.

Sometimes a film happens by accident, through a coincidence. This film, *Tchin Tchin,* is based on a play, directed by Peter Brook in Paris, in which I also acted. And that happened by coincidence. I was at a hotel in the provinces, taking a cure to lose a few pounds, and one morning, at the reception desk, I see this man leaving a note in my box. It turned out to be Peter Brook, who was staying at the same hotel with his wife. I had never met him, but he introduced himself and said, "As long as I'm running into you, I may as well tell you what I was going to put in your box: a note to ask you whether you'd be interested in doing a comedy with me in Paris? With my wife, Natasha Parry? It's called *Tchin Tchin.*" That was a play I knew, so I said, "When?" He said we could start rehearsing within a month. So I said, "Fine, I'll come." That's how it all started.

I liked his project because it was quick and clear. I can't commit myself very far ahead. Who knows where I'd be within a year? So I've always accepted those films which were ready to start, and rejected the ones that were long shots. Otherwise, it ceases to be a game. Waiting is no fun. I take life as it comes, but I want to take it at once.

The same happens in my private life, I know sometimes there are hesitations, considerations, but if life offers you certain things, take them. Whether it is a woman, a film, an adventure, an encounter, a child—take it all in your stride, let it all join the parade. That's why I find myself so much in accord with Fellini: he too takes things as they come, everything is an adventure, a voyage, even friendships. I can't be alone. I am nothing when I am alone.

Today, not being able to work, I feel lost. But tonight, at least, we'll all go out and eat together. I'll take my dialogue director, my seamstress—as long as we are together, around a big table, eating and laughing and talking, or making fun of each other. The main thing is not to be isolated, to be with people.

There are many philosophies, religions, and social and psychological theories that all state that man has to find himself before he can be of use to others. I feel just the other way around: I must be of use to others before I can be myself. And by "being of use" I don't mean to do a lot of theorizing or analyzing. Even when I was in school we had a

saying among the boys—I can't repeat it here in its original Neapolitan because it isn't exactly a polite expression—which stated that the best way to get out of a jam was to stop thinking about it. . . .

Maybe that attitude was part of early play-acting. I was always acting. I can't think back to a time when I wasn't. Even in my earliest youth, in church, and then in school, and then when I was a student in Rome, and we all acted in the Ateneo theater: my wife, Flora Mastroianni, Giulietta Masina, Carla del Poggio, and others who have become famous, had their peaks, and have now gone on to other and maybe better things. But of course the acting at that time was as amateurs. I really thought I wanted to become an architect. But a Roman impresario saw me act in that student theater and introduced me to Visconti, in whose troupe they needed a boy actor. He asked me if I was interested in joining a professional unit. I hesitated, said I was studying, but readily went to an appointment with Visconti (Zeffirelli was there too, he was then Visconti's assistant and set designer), who told me that they would try me, and if I couldn't play the part I could always be an extra.

It was a part in Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, in which Vittorio Gassman was playing Stanley Kowalski. I had the role of his friend, the part played in the film by Karl Malden. It fit me like a glove, since I come from that kind of milieu: my father had been a carpenter, and I had no real schooling as an actor. I was just being myself in that part, the nice boy from a working-class background. Visconti liked me so much that when the play was put on again the year after, they made me play the part of Stanley Kowalski. And it was a great success, too. It was the time when Gassman started his own company. I guess I was just lucky: at that time, in 1950, to be in Visconti's company was the best that could happen to an actor. I stayed with him for ten years.

We did all the major plays of that time and historical ones; I played in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, in *Death of a Salesman*, in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, in *Uncle Vanya*, in plays by Goldoni, and that was my real school, those plays and that director. Visconti taught me to distinguish between what was then, in actors' parlance, called "le cose guitte"—the strolling players' parts—and "le cose aristocratiche"—the quality acting parts. And all around me I had the major Italian actors of that time.

Rina Morelli, considered the major Italian actress then—I worked with her for ten years; Ruggero Ruggeri, Paola Borboni, Vittorio Gassman—I was like a wild pony suddenly finding itself in a stable of racing horses. I was simply lucky, I think. Many of my friends, maybe even better actors than I was, never made it.

Life, in short, has been very generous with me. In love, too. I have had beautiful loves in my life. I have two lovely daughters, I still have my health—apart from the cough caused by my excessive smoking—and I still have work! I am a fortunate man.

Of course, fortune wants to be helped a little by one's own efforts, but if you really love life, it recompenses you with fortune. There is no point in always playing the victim or complaining about your fate, or hating those who seem more lucky than you are—that will only make things go wrong.

Mind you, I have, in my time, been egotistical or spiteful, and sometimes I have thought that my acting this way, this innocently, taking life easily, is part of not having grown up properly, and that what I am actually doing is being self-centered like a child. It seems to me that I am generous with everyone, but maybe that is just a way of justifying my limits and deficiencies? Well, to be honest, I sometimes think this, but I don't insist on these thoughts. I might find that it is really so!

When I make a film, I never go to see the rushes, for example, because I don't want to risk not liking what I have done. It's simpler to put your head in the sand, like an ostrich, and that may be what I do in my real life as well. This tendency I have, not to look at myself in the mirror, may just be a bit of cowardice. A bit of dishonesty. Not to want to know, really, who I am and what I am. I tend to say to myself, I'll go and look at myself tomorrow, tomorrow. . . . Domani . . . domani. . . .

It is also true, I'm afraid, that when a person refuses to grow up, there is a strong component in the character that pushes him to wish to become an actor. Which doesn't mean that wanting to become an actor necessarily implies an unwillingness to grow up. But it is easier; it gives you the chance to play instead of working, or what you consider playing, in your innocence. And acting of course is a marvellous way for someone who is not sure of himself, not sure of being interesting to others, to make himself more interesting. You assume the personality of someone else, someone dreamt, someone who excites others, someone not as boring as yourself.... Like all children, you want to be in the center of things. I think that deep down all actors have this characteristic.

I must admit it's in the nature of the profession, this well-being that suddenly floods your emotions when you feel that people love you. That's an actor's exaltation.

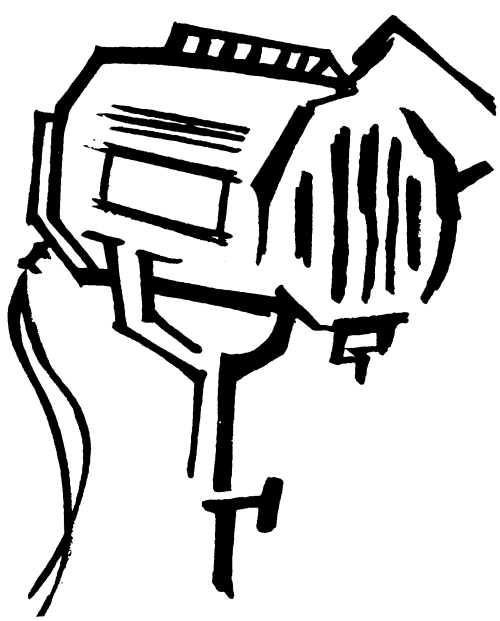
There is also another dimension: hiding your real self behind all these other faces. Letting the character take over. When you make a film, for example, you can safely assume that for three months you are someone else, you are safe. Especially since this other person has more color, more clarity, and this enriches you, your own grey self disappears under the exotic plumes of the character you are playing. It's a delicate line: the line between the real person and the character he plays. It's the most basic problem and at the same time the greatest temptation of acting. In my case, I can see that I often find myself elated by the part; somehow the colorful personality of the person I play suffuses me with a sense of existence. I assume, below the level of consciousness, some of the characteristics, be they good or bad, of this "other" person.

I have suffered from this in my real life too. This business of escaping behind the façade of a character. For example, when I have been abandoned by a woman, I've sometimes played the part of the victim, and only in time found out that that was a *part* I was playing.

It's hard to put one's finger on the thing one has most missed doing, but in my case I feel I could have been more loyal, that I've never made enough of an effort to really grow up, have more dignity, more courage. I've always more or less avoided taking positions on important issues, have never allowed myself to become really involved. I've always stood at the window and looked down at the world going by. One should sometimes go down and join what's happening in the street. But I never did that. And now I don't find that mine was a very noble position. Although, of course, the world managed to decline without me.

The new world is really not a very pleasant one—the decline in all sectors is more than can be explained by every generation's lament that "the good old days were better." There is so much superficiality around today, so much materialism; it seems to me things are getting worse at a faster pace than ever. Working in the cinema, in theater, in a way saves me: these worlds are worlds of fable, of imagination, it's like being in a safe spot, in a fortress, where real life cannot penetrate. Outside it's the inferno, but in here, with a sense of nostalgia and romance, we continue to tell each other beautiful stories.

■ Gideon Bachmann is the Rome editor of *Film Quarterly*.



Correction: Due to an editing error, there was a mistake in the review of *My Own Private Idaho* (Fall 1992). Page 24, column 1, line 26 should read "source of raw rejection and endless replenishment . . ." not "source of raw reflection . . ."

It is also true, I'm afraid, that when a person refuses to grow up, there is a strong component in the character that pushes him to wish to become an actor. Which doesn't mean that wanting to become an actor necessarily implies an unwillingness to grow up. But it is easier; it gives you the chance to play instead of working, or what you consider playing, in your innocence. And acting of course is a marvellous way for someone who is not sure of himself, not sure of being interesting to others, to make himself more interesting. You assume the personality of someone else, someone dreamt, someone who excites others, someone not as boring as yourself.... Like all children, you want to be in the center of things. I think that deep down all actors have this characteristic.

I must admit it's in the nature of the profession, this well-being that suddenly floods your emotions when you feel that people love you. That's an actor's exaltation.

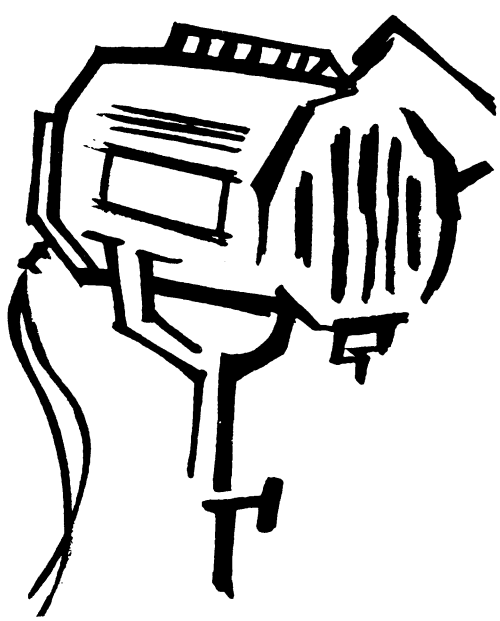
There is also another dimension: hiding your real self behind all these other faces. Letting the character take over. When you make a film, for example, you can safely assume that for three months you are someone else, you are safe. Especially since this other person has more color, more clarity, and this enriches you, your own grey self disappears under the exotic plumes of the character you are playing. It's a delicate line: the line between the real person and the character he plays. It's the most basic problem and at the same time the greatest temptation of acting. In my case, I can see that I often find myself elated by the part; somehow the colorful personality of the person I play suffuses me with a sense of existence. I assume, below the level of consciousness, some of the characteristics, be they good or bad, of this "other" person.

I have suffered from this in my real life too. This business of escaping behind the façade of a character. For example, when I have been abandoned by a woman, I've sometimes played the part of the victim, and only in time found out that that was a *part* I was playing.

It's hard to put one's finger on the thing one has most missed doing, but in my case I feel I could have been more loyal, that I've never made enough of an effort to really grow up, have more dignity, more courage. I've always more or less avoided taking positions on important issues, have never allowed myself to become really involved. I've always stood at the window and looked down at the world going by. One should sometimes go down and join what's happening in the street. But I never did that. And now I don't find that mine was a very noble position. Although, of course, the world managed to decline without me.

The new world is really not a very pleasant one—the decline in all sectors is more than can be explained by every generation's lament that "the good old days were better." There is so much superficiality around today, so much materialism; it seems to me things are getting worse at a faster pace than ever. Working in the cinema, in theater, in a way saves me: these worlds are worlds of fable, of imagination, it's like being in a safe spot, in a fortress, where real life cannot penetrate. Outside it's the inferno, but in here, with a sense of nostalgia and romance, we continue to tell each other beautiful stories.

■ Gideon Bachmann is the Rome editor of *Film Quarterly*.



Correction: Due to an editing error, there was a mistake in the review of *My Own Private Idaho* (Fall 1992). Page 24, column 1, line 26 should read "source of raw rejection and endless replenishment . . ." not "source of raw reflection . . ."

*Scott Simmon*

# "The Female of the Species"

## D.W. Griffith: Father of the Woman's Film

D.W. Griffith with Sally O'Neill on the set of *Battle of the Sexes*

Traditionally, D.W. Griffith is credited as "father" of a host of cinematic techniques and Hollywood patterns. If he is to be given progenitive tags at all, he deserves a more surprising one as "The Father of the Woman's Film"—and deserves too all the psychosexual conflicts such paternity entails.

"The woman's film" has always been as elusive as its evolving names, from the concise gender/genre affront of "the woman's weepie" to the academically neutered "melodrama." One might sus-

pect that something of the elusiveness arises from its being an oppositional genre, as it were, definable only in opposition to genres tracing the ambitions of male heroes. But such an explanation won't do in Griffith's era: his woman's films reveal mature narrative form *before* the genres centering on goal-driven men. (Earlier Westerns had yet to rely on the lone cowboy hero, significant only gradually after 1909 with the first "Broncho Billy" films.) The unexpected complexity of even the earliest and most cinematically primitive of Griffith's woman's films arises partly from his evident difficulties in wrestling directly with the rapid shifts in family patterns in the opening decade of the twentieth century, shifts he could dramatize more metaphorically elsewhere.

Through close to a hundred one- and two-reelers (the least innocent hundred) of the 450 he made for the Biograph company between 1908 and 1913, Griffith fundamentally outlined the sound-era variations on the woman's film. During its Hollywood heyday in the 1930s and 1940s, the woman's film tended to fall into subgenres loosely defined by whether the woman who suffers within domestic confines was seen as a daughter (e.g., *Now, Voyager*, *Johnny Belinda*), a wife (*Rebecca*, *A Letter to Three Wives*), a mother (*Stella Dallas*, *Imitation of Life*), or a "fallen" woman (*Ladies of Leisure*, *Back Street*). We can glance here at a few of Griffith's curious opening arguments for the genre through three early one-reelers: *The Fascinating Mrs. Francis* (1909), with its fallen woman; *A Flash of Light* (1910), with its (doubled) wife; and *The Painted Lady* (1912), with its anguished daughter.

There is, it soon becomes clear, an unresolvable conflict at the core of Griffith's project in his woman's films, and we need to acknowledge it if we are to make much sense of our three samples. That conflict might be simply suggested by looking briefly at a one-reel domestic drama of Griffith's from 1909 which is not strictly a woman's film—its main sympathy is with a man's suffering—called *To Save Her Soul*. As it opens, a "little choir singer" (Mary Pickford) seems to have a crush on the minister (Arthur Johnson), although romance is sidetracked when a vaudeville manager, his automobile broken down outside the rural church, hears her voice and offers her a slot at his music hall. After the work of rehearsals, her debut is a triumph, as the increasingly fretful minister discovers through a newspaper review. While visiting the music hall to see her onstage, he overhears a sharply dressed stage-door-Johnny bragging of his after-hours date with the singer. Thus, as a title puts it, the minister "finds her fate is that of the oft told story and resolves to save her." She looks in no particular need of a savior when he bursts into a banquet in honor of her triumph, although he sees her dressed in her stage costume, standing on a chair and drinking champagne in response to a toast. In an anteroom, she shuns his pleas to return to their village, gesturing instead to her body, as if in reference to her new life or achievement. He settles the argument by pulling a gun on her: "Crazed by jealous love, he would kill her that her soul may remain pure." This climax releases, somehow, mutual love. Last seen, the couple is back in the church, hugging while kneeling in prayer.

There are a couple of fairly obvious reasons why this story line might be troubling now, not least of which is the singer's motivation at the climax. The film is also a pretty clear melodramatic parable, reconstituting devout harmony away from threats that arise should women enter into the public space (a worry behind most of Griffith's domestic tales, filmed as the proportion of women in the work force was increasing dramatically). From this angle, *To Save Her Soul* would be at best a retrograde, thoroughly patriarchal, desperately inauthentic little film.

However, the conflict within it runs deeper—deeper even than the familiar complaint that Griffith's story lines are drearily "Victorian" and only redeemed for us by his innovations in cinematic form. Essentially, the conflict within a film such as *To Save Her Soul* is that its morality can't begin to mesh with the whole ontology of the cinemagoing apparatus—the situation of spectatorship and film viewing. To put it simply, Griffith is *creating* the very forces that his woman's film story lines most often fight against. *To Save Her Soul*, that is, makes a moralistic argument for traditional, church-centered values and against the dangerous public display and fame of its woman character. However, the film itself gets its genuine verve and wit from the display of Mary Pickford—who indeed is never more freshly seductive than in these Biographs—right from the opening shot, when her character stages a fall off the choir rail, manipulating her way into the minister's not-too-reluctant arms. The conflict in this film and so many like it can be reduced to a content/form split

in this sense: the story line takes its stand against what the filmgoing situation promotes—the public display of women.

To the extent, then, that Griffith's woman's films argue that American society is best served by maintaining women in private, family spaces, those films, almost by the very nature of their being films, are divided against themselves. One would think that it shouldn't be possible to argue for long (in narrative) that a woman had best *not* be displayed and (in form) that she *should* be, without the deepest hypocrisy becoming terribly clear. To put this more positively, however, it is possible that film form *necessarily* subverted Griffith's older moralism, whatever his story lines seemed to argue. He was probably neither so innocent nor so confused about this conflict as I've implied thus far. Even *To Save Her Soul* doesn't treat with anything like a straight face the process through which the minister returns Pickford to her presumably rightful place in the village church. Rather, the film borrows a staple figure from nineteenth-century women-authored, so-called "domestic" fiction—the noble but too intellectual minister who represses his authentic emotions—and, as in many of those novels, converts his male certitude into a source of drama and droll comedy (here represented in his pompously self-dramatizing arm gestures and clenched fists, leading to his eruption with the gun). In domestic novels, the minister was regularly the most sought-after of husbands for his relatively more feminized sensitivity and for the presumption that a minister's wife would share in her husband's work more fully than the wife of a businessman.[1] *To Save Her Soul* doesn't forget this figure of the minister so emotionally repressed that his love can only be explosive (a pattern drawn from popular memory in the ministerial sex scandals of the 1860s and 1870s, notably Henry Ward Beecher's, and remembered in more canonical fiction through *The Scarlet Letter*'s Dimmesdale).

One of the traits that gives the genre of the woman's film such enduring fascination is the way it carries within it certain "resistances" to its overt arguments: the repressive narratives are regularly undercut, partly via mise-en-scène and acting but also by conflicts within the narratives themselves. Such resistances are sometimes presumed to have begun with Douglas Sirk's ironies in his postwar American woman's films, but even the purest examples of the genre, such as King Vidor's 1937 version of *Stella Dallas*, with its story line ending in the social "eradication" of the mother, *also* holds a counter-story of Stella's personal triumph over the patriarchal world around her—or at least of her refusal to submit to it. Part of this resistance to the story line comes via acting—as in Barbara Stanwyck's expression of triumph in the final fade-out—and some of it, as I've suggested, comes from the very ontology of film itself (displaying for us what the world within the film presumes as eradicated).[2] The surprise, in looking back to Griffith, is less that he originates the genre but that he outlines its mature form, with its repressions certainly but with its resistances as well. *To Save Her Soul* reestablishes a patriarchal, indeed phallic, order, but not without mocking the agent who so little understands his motivation for whipping out his gun. Whether Griffith himself knew quite what he was doing must probably remain an open question.

In its eight shots running 417 feet (or about six minutes), *The Fascinating Mrs. Francis* sets forth the essential paradigm of the woman's film. Its primitive style—exclusively proscenium interior shots—only reinforces that this film is present at the creation, a sense deepened by the surrealistically primal emotions arising from various irresistible attractions and fickle changes of heart within unbroken shots. The central figure of the little family drama is the title's "Mrs. Francis," a lovely, dark woman with flowers in her hair, who is surrounded by admiring men in the first shot and left alone and despondent in the final one. As the film opens she is center of attention as a singer in an upper-class private musical evening. Chief among her admirers is the host's tuxedoed son, who is so quickly drawn into obsessive, suicidal desire that (in the film's second shot) Mrs. Francis receives a visit from the wealthy father who pleads with her to, presumably, free his son from her charms. (As with most of Griffith's earliest films, the original intertitles are lost.) Mrs. Francis's room is dominated by a large mirror—the first, unless I'm mistaken, in a Griffith film—evoking, rather uncomplicatedly here, the painterly iconography of vanity and narcissism. After initially resisting the father's plea, Mrs. Francis puts on a masterful act to make herself less socially attractive by ostentatiously coarsening her habits:

drinking liquor out of large mugs (in the company of two of Biograph's broadest buffoons, Mack Sennett and John Cumpson), smoking cigarettes (an act for which, committed in public, she could have been arrested),[3] and generally adopting large, "male" gestures, including wrapping her arm around the son (a gesture he seems to find particularly repugnant). Her masterstroke in repelling the son comes when she instructs another, younger woman in the exact physical tricks necessary to attract him. Thus Mrs. Francis stage-manages the restoration of the family.

In this brief film, Griffith sets up two prototypical images of desire: a complex image of the woman who must finally be avoided and a blander image of the marriageable one. The former is Mrs. Francis (as there is no "Mr. Francis" in evidence, she may be a divorcée), played by the vibrant Marion Leonard, whom Griffith often typecast as the disruptive third side of a love triangle: a "capricious woman" (*The Jilt*), a "discontented" one (*Fools of Fate*), a "cold hearted woman of society" (*Two Memories*) or, worst of all, one in his line of wives who neglect their children for some social frivolity (*Through the Breakers*). Interestingly, Marion Leonard is also "The Gibson Goddess" in his 1909 film of that title (that is, a woman of ideal beauty as arbitrated for his era by the illustrator Charles Dana Gibson), who is pursued at a seaside resort by a pack of harassing men until she has the inspiration to roll cotton into her leggings, leaving the men scurrying away under the discovery of perfection deformed. Gibson's curvaceous image of desire is only evoked by Griffith as a split-reel joke, and his casting of Marion Leonard also hints that Gibson's ideal wasn't his. The Gibson girl may have been on her way out of fashion by 1909 but that's partly Griffith's own doing, to the extent that his films were becoming the most popular mass images of their day, replacing Gibson's sexualized but static images of desire with Griffith's virginal but dynamic charmers.

As stripped down and paradigmatic of the genre as *The Fascinating Mrs. Francis* is, it still has room for "resistances" to its main argument. It is, in particular, keenly aware of its woman's images as artificially created through demeanor and gesture. The wealthy father, after all, first demonstrates to Mrs. Francis exactly how to physically assume the role of loose woman, as in his stumble round her room to teach a mock-drunken gait. Mrs. Francis proves a quick study and extends such manufactured gestures by showing the other woman (Florence Lawrence) exactly how to fake another variety of leg-clutching stumble and thus how to display herself as a weak woman in need of the son's assistance [see figure 1]. That second woman is not without her own resourceful touches, adding to her elegant stumble a dropped rose, bait which the son cannot resist.

In the final essential generic moment, all of Mrs. Francis's clever manipulation must, in this domestic context, take its toll. She watches the son walk into the next room arm-in-arm with his newfound ideal, then shakes her head at the dollars offered from his wallet by the father (as unfeeling a man as the genre will regularly feature). Instead, she leans over to pick up and smell the dropped rose, which the new lovers have by now forgotten. As described in the *Biograph Bulletin* (a flyer for theater owners and trade papers), her "act amounts to selfimmolation." Mrs. Francis becomes a lonely onlooker of the happiness of others, a happiness made possible by an "act" that extends her image as the "bad woman."

What is so surprising is that even here in 1909, at the origins of the genre, Griffith is producing a woman's film that is both conventional *and* a deconstruction of its images, revealing them as artifices consciously manufactured. In the terms that Mary Ann Doane takes from Luce Irigaray, this 1909 film must be said to contain progressive "double mimesis," enacting cultural notions of femininity in such a way as to "make visible . . . what was supposed to remain invisible."[4] What one has to conclude from finding this reputedly feminist pattern in Griffith's original is that such resistances have *always* been an essential feature of the genre.

With *A Flash of Light* in the following year, 1910, we move into a vastly wilder melodrama—with every emotional and narrative stop pulled—which nevertheless expresses specific social worries about the ideal of "wife" in an era of increasing divorce.

Our attention is initially focused on a young research chemist (Charles West) and his marriage to the younger, more vivacious of two sisters (Vivian Prescott). The older sister (Stephanie Longfellow) is shown crying alone after the wedding, but holds her love a secret as she suffers in silence in the extended household (which includes the chemist's

father, his adolescent sister, and servants). Despite efforts by the chemist to interest his wife in his laboratory experiments and the weighty books that go with them, she prefers (an intertitle tells us) "the outside world's glitter" and is off at an elegant party when a chemical explosion leaves her husband blind and deaf, despite the immediate ministrations of her sister. "Annoyed by his helplessness," the wife grabs an opportunity "to shine on the comic opera stage" and, with a new life thus arranged, writes to her husband's father announcing her intention "to get a divorce. Have entered the theatrical profession, where I hope to make a name." She returns home only to toss her wedding ring on a table. In a gesture the film takes as selfless, the good sister slips the wedding ring on her own finger so that the chemist mistakes her for his wife, "to deceive him until his affliction is passed." Some time later, the doctors perform an operation, convinced that they will be able to restore his sight and hearing. With reluctance, the estranged wife agrees to return—and to take back the ring—for the delicate moment when the bandages are to be removed from her husband's eyes. In the superbly melodramatic conclusion, the bandages are unwound, and the husband is able to see the wife he presumes to have stood by him devotedly, but she, instinctively retreating and stumbling away, knocks down the heavy black curtains, allowing in a flash of sunlight which brings blindness *again*, this time "incurable" [figure 2]. But in his instant of sight, the husband has apparently recognized the disdain in his wife and the devotion of the sister. The film ends with the chemist down on his knees, kissing the hem of the long-suffering sister, whose true love is now acknowledged by all. "A strongly dramatic picture, yet not altogether pleasant," in *Moving Picture World*'s understatement (July 30, 1910).

The implications of the astonishing, quite entertainingly played conclusion are worth teasing out. Clearly the wife is no mere bystander to her husband's tragedy but *causes* his blindness, literally so in allowing sunlight to cause the "incurable" condition. And it takes only a small metaphorical leap to assign blame to her for his initial blindness as well, brought by the bright flash of the chemical explosion, which follows hard on her desire to be *seen* outside the home, by her preferring the world's "glitter," by her desire to "shine" on stage. In the visual metaphors of the film, she seeks more light than her husband's eyes can tolerate. That such desire is reprehensible is reinforced by what one might call Griffith's "ethical intercutting" between the wife at her brilliant party and the husband working away in his windowless basement lab. If the ethical contrast looks less stark than in Griffith's more celebrated intercutting between, say, oppressed poor and oppressive stock manipulators in *A Corner in Wheat*, it is nevertheless hardly less difficult to pinpoint the villain of the piece: this would-be independent wife, seeking the light.

The film overtly takes its stand against the tyranny of superficial sight and first appearances by which the vivacious younger sister initially attracts the chemist. The *Biograph Bulletin* for the film glosses it this way: "The sight of a pretty face . . . nearly always intoxicates us to such degree as to make us believe that our impulses are induced by the heart and soul. . . . It is by the sight we are hypnotized." Thus the love of the older sister was ignored by the chemist when he could see. The moral here is familiar enough from a hundred fables. And yet, as a film-maker, Griffith once more runs up against that deep conflict we noted in connection with *To Save Her Soul*: silent film form must again rely on exactly that tyranny of sight against which the conventional morality of the narrative tries to take its stand. "A flash of light" twice blinds the chemist, but the phrase is also definitional of the silent film apparatus, and the wife *will* be seen by us, come what may.

The reverse image of the light-loving wife is the long-suffering sister. Her *worry* about being seen—about what she will have to give up when the husband regains his sight—is signified by her discomfort at the doctor's optimistic prognostications and her stiff-gestured stoicism at the return of the wedding ring before the unbandaging. The long-standing woman's film concern about the *price* of being an object on display—Laura Mulvey's "to-be-looked-at-ness"—is melodramatized in a number of Griffith films, and most profoundly so in the film we will come to next, *The Painted Lady*. Two earlier Griffith woman's films anticipate the good sister's worry about the tyranny of sight in *A Flash of Light*: *The Way of Man* (1909; whose title refers to a man's repulsion over a tiny scar presumed to disfigure Florence Lawrence's face after a lamp explosion; she nobly fakes her own suicide and runs off to live as a foster mother in an orphan asylum,

Figure 1. *The Fascinating Mrs. Francis* (1909). Mrs. Francis (Marion Leonard) demonstrates the way to fake a weak-woman's stumble for the new love interest (Florence Lawrence), as the young man's mother (Anita Hendrie, left) looks on.

Figure 2. The climax of *A Flash of Light* (1910). The doctors (William J. Butler, second from left, and George O. Nichols, arms toward window) and the substitute wife (Stephanie Longfellow, left) watch in horror as her sister, the legal wife (Vivian Prescott), knocks down the thick curtains, returning blindness to her husband (Charles West, seated).

leaving her man happily wed to her cousin) and *The Light That Came* (1909; in which a woman, despite her anxiety over another facial scar, funds an operation that will restore sight to her blind fiancé).

The nobility in these Griffith heroines comes from not simply a willingness but a *preference* to work unseen, to sacrifice in ways unrecognized. This trait brings Griffith to the venerable dilemma involved in trying to bring such women to the center of heroic narratives *without* violating their defining passivity. *A Flash of Light* resolves the conflict through a device that would have been familiar to readers of the nineteenth-century domestic novel—one that has been labeled "the mutilation of the male"—in which the virtuous woman, who would normally suffer in silence, is paired with a man crippled or otherwise stricken, whose very condition demands from her a more active, nearly equal life. There is a telling gesture at the end of Griffith's *Through Darkened Vales* (1911)—a "male" gesture legitimated, in this one context, for a woman—when Blanche Sweet wraps her arm high over the shoulder of her long-humiliated and now-blind suitor to guide him into her yard. The best-known precursor of the pattern, Rochester's crippling in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, has been taken as a woman's fantasy of revenge through emasculation, but at least in the American tradition, the mutilations also double as social dreams. Helen Papashvily described the pattern in her pioneering and witty study of the domestic novel: "If in some way the power of the male could be diminished or removed, then neither conscience nor society would censure the brave woman forced to act on her own initiative."[5]

Griffith allows the patient sister a triumph on just such terms, justifying through mutilation actions which work out to her own one-sided demand for marriage. (Just what is taking place during the long dark nights between husband and substitute wife is a question this light-obsessed film doesn't go into.) A parallel among the domestic novelists would be Mary Jane Holmes' *Darkness and Daylight* (1864), with its blind young man, who, as Papashvily suggests about Holmes' males generally, is "no longer a protagonist" but "a trophy, a token prize for the victor."[6]

And that is just about how the climax works out in *A Flash of Light*, as interest shifts to the battle between the two sisters and away from a husband who ends the film still maimed (if presumably with *hearing* restored). Indeed, the two sisters, who double as one woman in the husband's mind, are transformed by melodrama into competing *ideas* about the role of "wife," a split self, as it were. The pattern was vastly popular among domestic novelists, as, famously, with the cold and generous sisters of Mary Jane Holmes' *Tempest and Sunshine* (1854). Those sisters also compete over a young man who (of course) chooses the vivacious, heartless sister ("Tempest") and on his deathbed mistakes the faithful, good sister ("Sunshine") for her.[7] As film, Griffith's *A Flash of Light* is a precursor to a favorite pattern within Hollywood's woman's films: the doppelgänger sisters, one evil, one "normal" (later often played by the same actress), whose opposed personalities and moral positions battle over one very confused man (as with the two Blanche Sweets in *The Secret Sin* [1915] or, in the noir era, the two Bette Davises in *A Stolen Life* and the two Olivia De Havillands in *The Dark Mirror*). In *A Flash of Light*, the "evil twin" is, to simplify her only slightly, the wife whose craze for an independent "name" leads her to the extreme option of divorce, while the "good twin" demonstrates the wifely ideal, even if she must promote marriage on her own initiative from a husband "blind" to her value.

Among the first signs that the restless wife in *A Flash of Light* falls short of the ideal are several shots of her reading or holding a cheap paperbound book. The implication—reinforced by a tradition in painting—is that only an idle woman has leisure unoccupied by procreation or other domestic work. (The moralism is explicit in another Griffith film of 1910, unambiguously titled *A Salutary Lesson*, in which the wife is so "strongly addicted to the reading of cheap novels" that the care of her daughter becomes "odious.") *A Flash of Light* is vague about the length of the marriage before the wife puts down her books to seek her "name" and divorce, but the lack of children may also warn against what Teddy Roosevelt was calling "wilful sterility" or "race suicide" among the upper class. The specific blame assigned to the wife in the film can be found in divorce records of the era, as old complaints over a spouse's indulgence in "night life" were beginning to be voiced not as they had been traditionally by wives, but by husbands (as evening amusements became legitimated for women). The worry that the film takes up is not simply that divorce was rapidly increasing (after remaining almost static through

the nineteenth century) but that it was also shifting from a man's to a woman's option.

The contrasting figure of the good wife gets Griffith's most complex portrayal in *The Mothering Heart* (1913).[8] In *A Flash of Light*, she initially hovers at the edge of the frame, with the stoicism of Griffith's women-waiting-at-the-seashore films (*Lines of White on a Sullen Sea* [1909], *The Unchanging Sea* [1910], etc.), until the husband's mutilation provides her with opportunities. Such heroic passivity worked its way to Griffith via nineteenth-century stage melodrama. As the heroine declaims with winning directness in a play by John Howard Payne (whose life is the subject of Griffith's feature *Home, Sweet Home*), "I can only wait patiently for the storm to burst on my head and trust to heaven for deliverance."[9]

*The Painted Lady* (1912), to my mind one of Griffith's greatest films, is a tragedy of a daughter's attempted rebellion from the family. For a one-reeler it's quite elaborate, and with a camera speed down to approximately 14 frames-per-second it runs, properly projected, to over 18 minutes (in 65 shots, excluding titles).

Even trade journals recognized something rare. "The subtlety of it makes it a very hard picture to comment on; one hesitates as before jumping into a very deep pool," said *Moving Picture World* (November 9, 1912). The focus is on an eldest daughter (Blanche Sweet), favorite of her bearded, black-garbed father. The film opens on the day of a church-supervised "Ice-Cream Festival," a wholesome meeting place for the town's young women and men. The vibrant younger sister (Madge Kirby), primping at home before a mirror, demonstrates face powder and eyebrow plucking for her more primly dressed sister. As if in demonstration of the younger sister's advice that "You must paint and powder to be attractive," the men who crowd around her at the festival pointedly avoid her older sister, who retreats into a secluded bower to weep quietly. She is interrupted by the genial, trusting minister, who introduces her to a handsome "stranger" (Joseph Graybill)—who we have earlier been told is a "plotter." Though her father politely refuses him entry into their home, he soon becomes "her first sweetheart" after she sneaks out the window for clandestine meetings at their bower. Eager for his compliments, especially of her face, she solemnly rubs her cheeks and shakes her head to explain that she uses no makeup. At home, she can now gaze into the mirror with pleasure. Chatting freely at one of their meetings, she apparently reveals the location of her father's strongbox—after which the stranger gives her what seems to be a first kiss. He now has the information he needs to break into the family home, his face hidden by a kerchief. She confronts him at gunpoint and he is killed in their struggle over the gun. At the discovery of his identity, she is "shattered." Weeks go by but she is still sneaking out to reenact imaginary meetings in the bower with her dead lover, obsessively replaying the conversation about her face, unfazed by the mockery of passing children and at one point introducing the invisible figure to an older woman (presumably her nurse, or possibly her mother). Eventually, she is "tempted" by face powder to shade her now even paler face. But following that day's imaginary conversation, she gazes at her powdered face in a small mirror on the base of her purse. Seeing herself proves, somehow, a final, fatal shock. Her father arrives only in time to catch her collapsing body.

It is possible to take this really quite extraordinarily strange film as another in Griffith's cautionary tales: about the conflict between older, authentic, home-centered morality and the threats to it by modern temptations, here represented by cosmetics and all that using them implies in this context about abandoning parental authority for consumer culture. Thus the film would illustrate the sort of puritanical fretting still filling newspaper advice columns well into World War I—as with a concerned young woman writing to the *Jewish Daily Forward* in 1915: "Is it a sin to use face powder? Shouldn't a girl look beautiful? My father does not want me to use face powder. Is it a sin?"[10] From that angle, the film also warns against a growing consumerist faith in "youthful beauty" promoted by the burgeoning cosmetics industry, as sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd found in their study of evolving "Middletown" attitudes between the 1890s and 1920s.[11] One might also see a continuation of Griffith's warnings about the hazards for women of public spaces—even one so apparently innocent as the Ice-Cream Festival—running back to an early Biograph like *The Honor of Thieves* (1909), in which a smooth thief picks up a trusting Jewish girl at a dance hall only in order to rob her pawnbroker father.

If one hesitates to lump *The Painted Lady* among such relatively simple cautionary tales, it's not because Griffith progressed away from them. As late as *The White Rose* (1923), the source of innocent orphan Mae Marsh's sexual tragedy (leading to an illegitimate child) is the moment when she is taught to apply makeup, an ironic reminder of which returns at the wildly melodramatic finale when makeup is applied to cover her pallor at her deathbed marriage. What moves The *Painted Lady* beyond the cautionary tales is partly its complexity in dramatizing the pressures for modern conformity and its way of suggesting, within the claustrophobic bower, the diminishing space for the unmarried woman generally (as the percentage of unmarried women *decreased* in the early years of the century and average marriage age grew younger). Additionally, this mirror-obsessed woman's film takes on complex questions about the price of being gazed upon. As such, it has parallels with sophisticated novels of a few years before, memorably Stephen Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) and Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth* (1905), which plot ever more confining, ultimately fatal tragedies of women who are "looked" into being, who take their self-definitions from the way they are looked upon by others. Crane's Maggie is deemed a "looker" in the sense that men look her into existence until, abandoned as a little-noticed streetwalker, she loses even her name in the narrative.[12] In *The House of Mirth* (the masterwork among the era's novels about women confined by the gaze), Lily Bart has a beauty that is analyzed or employed as a weapon by everyone, including Lily herself, who begins to be frightened by defects revealed by the mirror, "two little lines near her mouth, faint flaws in the smooth curve of her cheek."[13]

*The Painted Lady* is structured around five scenes of Blanche Sweet's character gazing at herself in mirrors: with uncertainty after the lessons in makeup from her sister; with satisfaction after the certification of her physical worth by the stranger; and ultimately with horror in her final self-assessment leading to her death [figures 3 & 4]. The mirror prop moves beyond the simple symbol of narcissism as in *The Fascinating Mrs. Francis*, and its implications about the woman viewed also move the film beyond those essentially cautionary tales about women who opt for the public space of the musical stage in *To Save Her Soul* and *A Flash of Light*. The mirror scenes in *The Painted Lady* scrutinize women from just the opposite angle, not as public display but rather as secret views of a woman contemplating herself and who presumes herself alone—woman as "surveyor" of her own identity (as John Berger put it in his influential survey of images of woman and mirrors).[14] And the insecurity that keeps Sweet's character returning to the mirror in the first half of the film is not unconnected with her tragedy of obsession in the second half. Griffith here introduces to the movies, via the prop of the mirror, certain psychological interrogations and social inquiries about women's roles which America's best novelists had grappled with not so many years earlier, as in *The House of Mirth*; or Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove* (1902; whose subtly manipulative heroine opens the novel "star[ing] into the tarnished glass too hard indeed to be staring at her beauty alone"); or Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900; whose heroine practices in the mirror seductive gestures that her man, Drouet, has admired in other women).[15] At its most uncompromising, this novelistic tradition carried its perceptions to a logical end, with heroines who escape visual scrutiny into death, typically suicides by drowning (as with Crane's Maggie and Edna Pontellier of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*). Griffith tried this narrative, not very convincingly, in *The Sands of Dee* (1912), where the innocent country heroine drowns herself after becoming the subject of a painting by a wandering artist. From this angle, even *Broken Blossoms* (1919) looks like the story of a young woman whose tentative examination of her newly discovered beauty in the Chinese shopkeeper's mirror is a harbinger of her death. In Griffith, as in the artistic tradition from which he draws, mirrors are a dangerous prop less because they signify female narcissism than because they force the heroines to see themselves under the terms of the outside world.

The bizarre conclusion of *The Painted Lady*, where the woman seems to die from the very sight of herself, may only make sense in light of such patterns in the artistic air. Her shock seems to come from seeing herself "painted" with makeup for the first time and thus perhaps succumbing to an image at variance with her obsessive fantasy of a man who would love her for her true face. Such a hope and shock of disillusion is also at the center of Griffith's feature *True Heart Susie* (1919), in which Lillian Gish's title character has a charmingly smug con-

Figures 3 & 4. *The Painted Lady* (1912).
Blanche Sweet as the title character,
surveying her image in mirrors.

viction that her rural sweetheart loves her for her open face, free of cosmetics—until he runs off with a "painted" Chicago girl. This prompts pathetic mirror scenes, with Susie caught between her country attempts to match modern ways (with cornstarch as makeup) and her aunt's moralizing ("Powder! Do you think you can improve on the Lord's work!"). Wherever one places the blame in the ambiguous, last, fatal look into the mirror in *The Painted Lady*, it is a tragedy of being gazed upon.

If Griffith's one-reeler can bear comparisons with sophisticated turn-of-the-century novels, it's in good part because of a complexity in the acting. Blanche Sweet's performance is surely one of the most compelling in the pre-feature era. As she commented nearly 60 years later, she worked within a passive range—"reactions to what life is doing to her"—restrained by the character's repression for the first half of the reel and then by a "shattered" psychopathy for the second half.[16] But dividing these two sides of the film is Sweet's melodramatic tour-de-force at the lover/burglar's death, with her body and facial gestures making for a montage of surprises in an unbroken medium shot. In shock after the shooting, she talks to the clearly unresponsive body, questioning it and explaining; but when her father returns and begins to manhandle the body with something like Old Testament anger, Sweet's character rouses herself with a previously unseen fury, knocking her father's hands aside as she mouths "mine!" in reference to the corpse and caresses her cheeks in a gesture we recognize as her earlier response to her lover's admiration of her face. At this, her grim father rather touchingly shifts his attention from the corpse to wrap his arm around his evidently deranged daughter. Sweet's performance is far beyond realism, communicating by exaggeration and by precise gestural echoes of earlier scenes—as she has said, "We only had a few feet of film to put across an emotion"—but the semaphore style nonetheless infuses an authentic psychology into melodrama.[17]

One doesn't need to make much of a metaphorical leap to read the film as melodramatizing the woman's first experience of sex—an experience portrayed as trauma. The stranger proves himself a rapist, one can say, violating the private space of her home, her trust, and the strongbox; the frenzied struggle over the pistol proves her shattering. It is always difficult to say just how far sexuality enters intentionally into Griffith's work, since the subject is so censored and disguised. But it is probably a mistake to confine even his intentional world to one of Victorian propriety. Undeniably, many of his domestic dramas do take such propriety to extremes that now play only as comic, as with the very early *For a Wife's Honor* (1908), where "a true friend's sacrifice," when caught in the room of another man's wife, is to confess to being a burglar to save her, at least, from taint. Very occasionally, Griffith did allude unmetaphorically to sexual passion, as in *A Victim of Jealousy* (1910), where an unreasonably jealous husband is temporarily subdued by an evening of sex—signified by the wife leaving her girdle on his chair (what the *Biograph Bulletin*, more circumspect than the film, calls "placing within his range delicate reminders of her own gentleness")—after which the film cuts to "The next morning" title card. More explicitness than this one cannot find in Griffith, nor could one expect much more within the era's commercial film-making.

Instead, the sexuality one now sees in his earliest films tends to look like Freudian jokes, so obvious that they can surely only be unconscious (as with the repetition compulsion rape of *The Hindoo Dagger* [1909] or the primal rage of *The Restoration* [1909]). As tempting as it is to read the films this way, it is with a false sense of superiority that one does so, patting their little heads for their naïveté. At least by 1912, the year of *The Painted Lady*, a number of Griffith films do seem to know quite what they're doing as they displace sexuality into narrative, not unlike the transference of dreams. (As subjects for further consideration, one might begin with three one-reelers from 1912: *The Female of the Species*, with its bizarre conflation of archetypes; *The Girl and Her Trust*, with its wild profusion of phallic imagery; and *A Change of Spirit*, with its evocation of sexuality as criminality.)

The pattern of *The Painted Lady* is not so clear, even as sexual parable. On the one hand, as I've suggested, it's Griffith's version of a story variously retold in the era's novelistic cycle about the fatal price paid by the "gazed-upon" woman. But one must also factor in a less progressive reason for the tragedy—because it arises from the point at which the heroine becomes, in a sense, the phallic woman by taking up her father's pistol. This entry into the world of action proves too much for her, and her mental collapse evokes the nineteenth-century presumption of women innately prone to nervous col-

lapse and outright insanity if their delicate mechanisms were strained—especially by an entry into the male world—a hazard to which women were said to be particularly prone during times of sexual change. A basic text here would be Dr. Edward H. Clarke's much reprinted *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for Girls*, full of horrifying case histories of women who allowed the intellectual "college regimen" to get "out of harmony with the rhythmic periodicity of the female organization."[18] Isaac Ray, a prominent pre-Freudian American psychiatrist explained in an article entitled "The Insanity of Women Produced by Desertion or Seduction" that "With women it is but a step from extreme nervous susceptibility to downright hysteria, and from that to overt insanity. In the sexual evolution, in pregnancy, in the parturient period, in lactation, strange thoughts, extraordinary feelings, unreasonable appetites, criminal impulses, may haunt a mind at other times innocent and pure."[19] In this sense, then, our heroine's "sexual evolution" *itself* proves fatal and, in her standing up to the burglar like a phallic man, one would have to place her within another American novelistic tradition of drowned women, via Hawthorne's Zenobia in *The Blithedale Romance*, whose suicide results from attempting to deny her place.

What remains surprising, from Griffith, is that the young woman's acceptance of the ways of her puritanical father is one clear source of the tragedy, not any modern abandon, which is characteristic only of her younger sister, who is both "painted" and thoroughly healthy when we last see her. *The Painted Lady* is not so neat a parable as most of Griffith's woman's films, and therein lies its continuing interest. Like so much of Griffith, it remains caught between two centuries, looking backwards to nineteenth-century medical ideas of women's sexual weaknesses but also ahead to twentieth-century explorations about the price of the gaze.

It is evident from Griffith's woman's films—both from their numbers and their narratives—that women not men were central to his career-long project. This is, of course, not to say he allowed women to claim power, only that their rapidly changing roles were both a worry and a dramatic opportunity. If Griffith borrowed the means of America's nineteenth-century domestic novelists (notably the devout and resourceful, if physically weak, pubescent girl), it was in order to dispute their conclusions. Still, certain points of agreement with those novelists reveal how Griffith is finally a "father" of Hollywood only in certain limited geographic and formalist senses. Prominently absent from his entire body of work is the male success story: the tale of admired willpower and drive which underpins the Hollywood myth in both its positive generic forms (e.g., the Western) and negative (the gangster film). Instead, his films tend most to admire certain passive virtues, of endurance or sacrifice. Where Hollywood came to confine such virtues within the genre of "the woman's film," Griffith had distributed them to heroine and hero alike. It is revealing that when Douglas Fairbanks was signed from Broadway in 1915 and assigned to Griffith's Triangle studio, the director could come up with no significant use for the actor who by the following year would be showing Hollywood its way through his vastly popular tales of energetic striving. With Griffith's active men, we stand ready for the nearly inevitable moment when—as an intertitle from *Brutality* (1912) puts it—"The brutal spirit asserts itself." The phrasing there is precise: not "his" but "the" brutal spirit, a general trait, ever ready, in men, to assert itself. Griffith views male energy, even when it remains this side of rape, from a nearly eighteenth-century aristocratic artistic tradition, where ambition is more liable to be the object of irony than admiration. (Of his many object lessons about male ambition, the most flamboyant is *For His Son* [1912], in which a businessman finds success by adding just a pinch of cocaine to his new soft drink—"for that tired feeling, Dopokoke"—only to have his son fall into fatal addiction.)

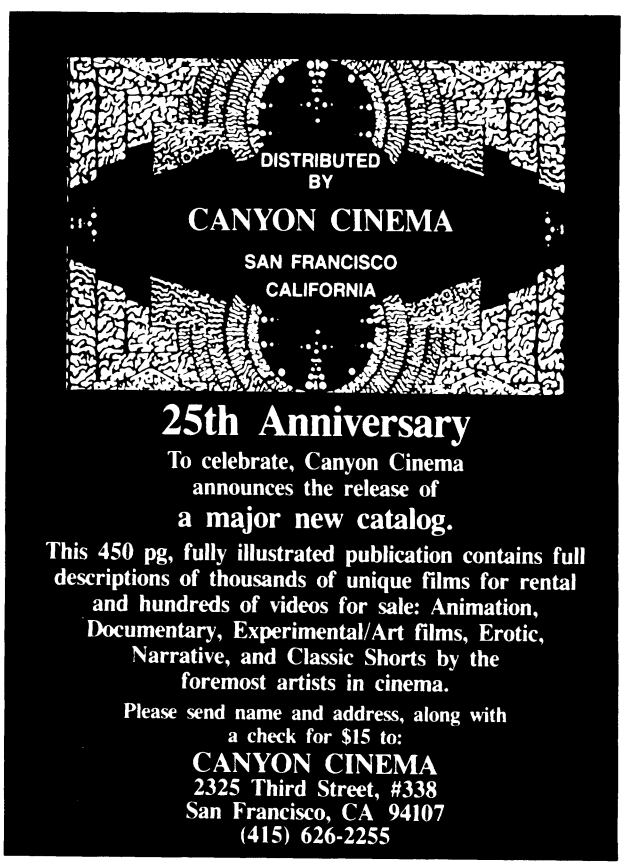
In a sense, Griffith's dreams for the woman's film reach a limit in *Intolerance* (1916), whose four eras are linked by the static shots of Lillian Gish as the impassive mother, taking on the full sorrow of history, her cradle endlessly rocking toward some apotheosis of the maternal melodrama. Perhaps surprisingly, in that epic and elsewhere, Griffith tends to rely upon "woman's time" ("cyclical or monumental" patterns of "gestation [and] eternal recurrence," rather than time as "project," in Julia Kristeva's definition) and on the "female plot" (which tends to substitute "an inner drive toward the assertion of selfhood" for male plots of ambition, in Peter Brooks' formulation).[20] Griffith's formative woman's films argue that any expression of female

sexuality (as in *The Painted Lady*) or hopes for an independent occupation (as in *A Flash of Light*) can have only tragic consequences. And yet it may be to their credit that while they clung to a pathologically repressive ideal, they somehow couldn't quite ignore the price paid for it.

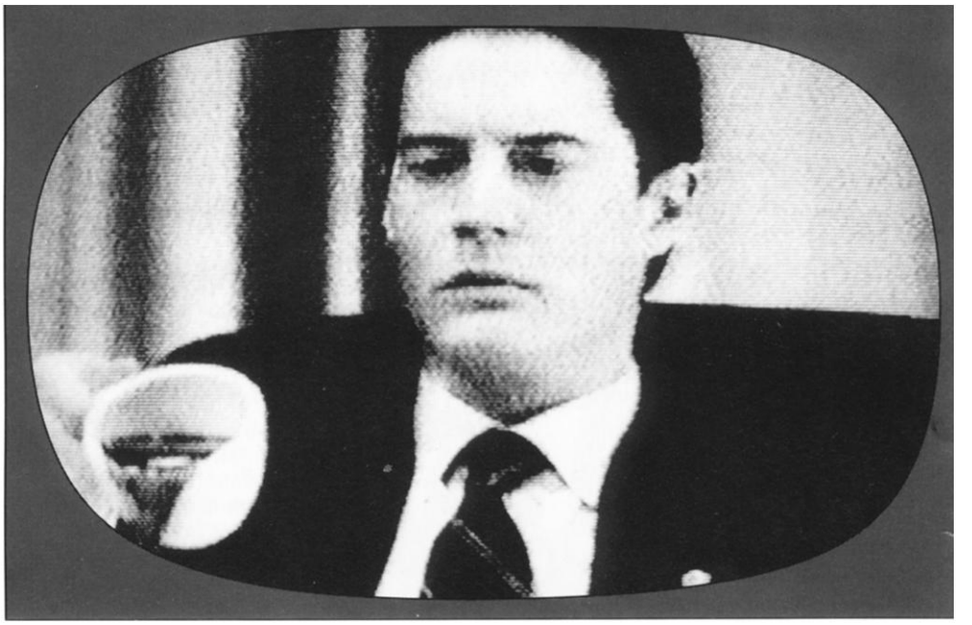
■ Scott Simmon teaches at San Francisco State University and is co-author (with Raymond Durgnat) of *King Vidor, American* (University of California Press, 1988).

## Notes

1. On the figure of the minister in the domestic novel, see Nina Baym, *Women's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820–1870* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 41.
2. "How they got us to consent to our own eradication!" is the response to the end of *Stella Dallas* in Marilyn French's novel *The Women's Room*, quoted by Linda Williams in her analysis of *Stella Dallas* as "a progressive film," "'Something Else Besides a Mother': *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama," *Cinema Journal*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Fall 1984), pp. 2–27.
3. The Sullivan Ordinance, enacted January 21, 1908, made it a crime for the manager of a public establishment in New York City to allow a woman to smoke.
4. Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 76; quoted in Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 181–83.
5. Helen Waite Papashvily, *All the Happy Endings: A Study of the Domestic Novel in America, The Women Who Wrote It, The Women Who Read It, in the 19th Century* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), p. 56; "The Mutilation of the Male" is one of her chapter titles. See also Tania Modleski, *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Routledge, 1984), p. 46.
6. Papashvily, *All the Happy Endings*, p. 150.
7. Mary Jane Holmes, *Tempest and Sunshine* [1854] (New York: Odyssey Press, 1968), p. 42.
8. I discuss *The Mothering Heart* in some detail in *The Films of D. W. Griffith* (forthcoming: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
9. *Julia: or, The Wanderer* (New York, 1806); quoted in David Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled: American Theater and Culture, 1800–1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 174.
10. Isaac Metzker, ed., *A Bintel Brief* (New York, 1972); quoted in Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), p. 72.
11. Robert and Helen Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929), p. 117.
12. Stephen Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (New York: Fawcett, 1960), p. 29.
13. Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (New York: Signet, 1964), p. 31. See also Martha Banta's discussion of these novels in *Imaging American Women: Idea and Ideals in Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), pp. 232, 310.
14. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC/Penguin, 1972), pp. 45–51.
15. Henry James, *The Wings of the Dove* (New York: Signet, 1964), p. 10. Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (New York: Penguin, 1981), p. 104.
16. "Camera Three": "D.W. Griffith: The Biograph Years" (CBS-TV, 1979).
17. Ibid.
18. Edward H. Clarke, *Sex in Education; or, A Fair Chance for Girls* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1873), p. 83.
19. Isaac Ray, "The Insanity of Women Produced by Desertion or Seduction," *American Journal of Insanity*, vol. 23 (1866), p. 267; quoted in G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), p. 83.
20. Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," trans. Alice Jardine and Harry Blake, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1981), p. 17; Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), p. 39.



*Martha Nochimson*



# Desire Under the Douglas Firs

## Entering the Body of Reality in "Twin Peaks"

The dazzled affection that Dale Cooper, hero of "Twin Peaks," inspired in a large television spectatorship can only partly be explained by the appeal of actor Kyle MacLachlan. Nor can it be ascribed merely to the time-tested popularity of the detective figure; on the contrary, Cooper lays waste to a multitude of film and television detective clichés. Since his creators came to the series with distinguished careers in each of the major media, David Lynch and MacLachlan himself in film and Mark Frost in television, some inventive synthesis between the traditions was expected, but Dale Cooper is more than a little juggling of two formulas. "Coop" wears the regulation suit and trench coat but sets a fresh and compelling standard for media detectives and opens a new chapter in the relationship between mystery and desire.

Cooper's eager desire to enter the labyrinths of mystery ties knots in the venerable Hollywood Mystery Tradition (HMT), although the overall narrative line of the series initially suggests that Lynch has brought that tradition with him in his first foray into television. In the HMT, the life of a male protagonist is disrupted by an encounter with his darker side when desire meets the body of a deadly (or dead) woman. In "Twin Peaks," FBI Agent Cooper solves the mystery of who murdered the desirable Homecoming Queen Laura Palmer (Sheryl Lee), and ends up staring into a mirror at an image of himself so monstrous that none can doubt that his stint on the case has plunged him into darkness. But when I asked David Lynch why Cooper's bridge to self-knowledge is a dead woman, I was greeted with silence. Then: "It isn't her."[1]

Lynch asserts that Laura, "Twin Peaks' " femme fatale, is not the point of initiation. As Lynch goes on to point out, his detective's fascination with mystery *precedes* the particularity of the case. Dale Cooper comes to Twin Peaks already filled with a passion for mystery, and Laura's death offers him a major occasion to indulge it. Readiness by itself, however, does not go to the heart of "Twin Peaks'" innovation. What kind of readiness is the question.

There is a kind of readiness that is standard in the Television Mystery Tradition (TMT). The basic model for the TMT is not the erotically stunned investigator but ever-ready Sherlock Holmes. Like Holmes, the standard television detective is not seduced into his narratives; he enters them with a passion to dispel *any* illegibility represented by *any* body of crime—which is not a disruption in his life but rather its raison d'être. For the Holmesian television detective, lack of clarity is the desirable aspect of mystery, an intellectually aphrodisiac opportunity for orgasmic restoration of clarity. If this seems a contradiction in terms, let doubters observe the quivering of Jeremy Brett as Holmes contemplates a jumble of clues. But again the fit is incomplete. Cooper is Holmesian only in his predisposition for mystery; he is far too sensually stimulated by Douglas firs, among other Twin Peaks delights, to qualify as a man of cerebral lust.

Ironically, Cooper's striking originality is best understood in contrast to what his seemingly different filmic and home-box colleagues share: the disavowal of vulnerability or illegibility in the body of the detective (the fear of castration?).[2] In the movies, the disavowal is accomplished through a displacement of anxiety about the body onto a woman. When the detective's body is brought into play, all frailty is transferred to the body of a femme fatale. For example, the obligatory assaults all Hollywood detectives endure are inevitably contextualized as either directly or indirectly brought about through the unreliability or treachery of a desirable woman's body—not theirs. Once attacked, the detective's body demonstrates an eerie dependability under pressure—the cinema sleuth is second only to Bugs Bunny in ignoring torn limbs or bullet holes as he struggles to solve the mystery. The shifts and changes associated with the body, so risky in the world of the film detective, are totally feminized. Television's asexual, cerebral Holmesian is even more drastically disembodied. Here, the detective's otherness to body is created by displacing all the vagaries of physicality onto the miasmic body of the world.

Involvement causes contamination (crime); by contrast, the detective postures as a detached, virtually fleshless site of cleansing. Accustomed as we are to this contempt for the body in the detective genre, we are slow to question it or its effectiveness. Familiarity makes it seem right.

However, it isn't truly right for television, a medium that by nature deflates the dualism of the orthodox detective through its unorthodox normalization of shifts and slippage—and thus its normalization of the vicissitudes of the flesh.[3] The popularity of Dale Cooper is a tacit admission that on a visceral level the television audience knows how wrong the traditional detective is in that medium. As we shall see, Cooper made us gasp with delight precisely because he identifies with the vulnerability of his body. *Uniting* precision of mind with flow of body in his pursuit of mystery, Cooper emerges as the first detective truly appropriate to the medium of television.

David Lynch and Mark Frost point the way toward a televisual aesthetic through the incorporation of the detective genre into the serial format. Within the serial context, with its mini-closures which suggest partial distinctions rather than absolute divisions, Cooper invites us to see how desire for mystery can produce in the detective an interpenetration of mind and body in an ever widening gyre of wonder. Can. The erotically anxious, shadow-haunted milieu of the Hollywood detective is not absent from "Twin Peaks." Nor is the antiseptic Holmesian stance. But Cooper's mystery involves a heretofore unthinkable freedom from the masculine fear of the body that obsessive disavowals traditional to the detective genre suggest.

Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) uses the Tibetan Method

## Freedom from Fear

In "Twin Peaks," Cooper detects through immersion—physical indeterminacy, obliqueness, and ambiguity are his primary modes of discovery. Once Cooper has used standard FBI procedures to assemble his suspects, he turns to his preferred means of inquiry, a modus operandi that initiates the town and the television spectator into the sleuthing approach of a mind-body detective. In the third episode, he introduces his unorthodox procedures to the audience and the Twin Peaks constabulary as he

sets himself up in a local forest, incongruously situated in front of a blackboard, to expound upon the Tibetan Method.

This Method is not grounded in the pragmatic "realities" of most police dramas: police academy, laboratory, or mean streets. Instead it issues from the most powerful plane of reality in "Twin Peaks": the dream. Cooper narrates a dream about a longing to end the political repression of Tibet that is identified with what amounts to a longing to free the body from the repressiveness of logic. "I awoke from the same dream realizing that I had subconsciously gained knowledge of a deductive technique involving mind-body coordination operating hand in hand with the deepest level of intuition." The mixed, seriocomic tone of Cooper's presentation under the Douglas firs itself challenges us to use Cooper's method, an exercise that pointedly avoids the routine detective apparati of logic, clues, or muscle. Instead, Cooper designs a unique heuristic process which calls for him to throw rocks at a bottle situated on a tree stump—at a precisely measured distance—as the name of each suspect is read from the blackboard.

As we accustom ourselves to meditating on crime through the sensory experience of natural textures and sounds, the illegibility of the body loses its accustomed code as a site of fear; instead it emerges as the locus of knowledge through play as it was when we were young. However, the result is not a regressive infantilism but a renewal of human desire for a miraculous world.

Lynch/Frost's choice of an FBI agent as the hero of "Twin Peaks" draws attention to the transformation of normal coding. A mass-media FBI agent character ordinarily depends on our understanding of the literal job of the FBI: to intervene in criminal investigations when state or national boundaries are crossed. Television government agents are the sine qua non of television's endless and obsessive restoration of limits, barriers that authorize only the most domesticated form of desire. In "Twin Peaks," the traditions are honored in that, literally, a state boundary is crossed during the murder of Laura Palmer, and that is the conventional reason why Special Agent Cooper is the man for the job. However, as a boundary specialist, Cooper is not the disavower of the body, the purger of bodily fluctuation through the rigid limits of convention, but a specialist in *crossing* boundaries, a quester capable of moving confidently and productively between the mental clarity of law and the intelligent fluidity of the body.

Such talents are immediately in demand when Laura Palmer is found brutally murdered—naked, pallid, blue-lipped, and wrapped in plastic—within the first three minutes of the series. This crime is a form of reality testing for Twin Peaks (and television tradition), revealing a town layered into slick, flat planes of cliché (mental limits) and rivers of wild energies (body). Solving the murder means going beyond cliché through a mind capable of negotiating many layers. Local law (and television tradition) is by nature merely part of the plane of cliché, and thus only capable of partial vision. Local law—read common sense—is affectionately personified by Sheriff Harry S. Truman (Michael Ontkean), but his traditional search for "just the facts" has limited application because "Twin Peaks" challenges the constitution of a "fact."

The traditional fact loses its hard edge when the crucial clues are discovered in dreams and visions. Cooper's dreams reveal what pragmatic detection will never find: Bob (Frank Silva) and Mike (Al Strobel), two male energies from another dimension who have crossed the limits of the natural world to inhabit it as parasites of human hosts, as they term their local habitations. Bob, a male Medusa complete with snaky locks and bone-chilling smile, is the young male energy that has used smiling Leland Palmer, Laura's father (Ray Wise), as his host and that impels him to horrifying atrocities against his daughter (and others). Mike is Bob's former companion in crime, one-armed from ripping off the offending, guilty arm, who now hunts Bob to terminate his reign of terror. The absurdly banal names adopted by these devastating powers once they have crossed into the plane of "ordinary" reality are, according to Frost and Robert Engels, a writer-producer on the series, a primary example of the "Twin Peaks" tone: here, banalities tragicomically mask strange forces.[4]

Cooper first meets Bob and Mike in a dream at the end of the third episode of the series. The meeting between detective and crime within the dream context expands the conventional role of the detective's eye (which traditionally is restricted to controlling through looking), emphasizing the otherness of body. Cooper's eye within the dream is, by contrast, enraptured.

The heart of MIKE's message to Cooper is couched in five rhymed lines:

> Through the darkness
> The future past
> The magician longs to see.
> One chance out between two worlds
> Fire walk with me.

The magician is Cooper. The heart of detection is the magic of boundary crossing. Cooper's "chance out" will enable him to cross the limits of the ordinary world into the darkness where future and past conflate.

The set design, the refrain elements in the series, as well as the visual and narrative texture of "Twin Peaks," implicate the spectator in both kinds of perception: the more conventional use of the controlling camera eye is disrupted by visual elements compatible with Cooper's Tibetan Method, by an alternate camera eye enraptured by indeterminate visual distinctions. Richard Hoover, the production designer of all the series episodes except the pilot, created a look for the show in which, he says, the concepts of inside and outside were conflated. A massive use of wood gives an outside feeling to the interiors. The interiors burgeon with dead animals and their parts—horns, shells—and nature drawings that are often photographed as if they were theatrical backdrops for the action.[5]

The opening signature montage (my terminology) of "Twin Peaks," designed by David Lynch, prepares us for both visual styles. Its lap dissolves among sharp images to the strains of the slow, mournful, but somewhat romantic theme music (composed by Angelo Badalamenti) suggest, according to Lynch, an enigmatic interpenetration of opposites as robins and cascading waterfalls dissolve into the artifacts of an industrialized logging industry which spews thick smoke from its smokestacks and generates spearlike golden sparks with its gears. The series is coded to create a rich "cultural compost heap," as Mark Frost calls the unorthodox yoking of elements in "Twin Peaks." With its suggestion of the blending of once discrete entities until they fuse with each other, this phrase suggests the organic reality that calls forth Cooper's mind-body approach.

In this context, the purely Holmesian sleuth seems alarmingly invasive. A synecdoche of the reductive aggressiveness of the Holmesian mind is provided by the redoubtable Albert Rosenfeld (Miguel Ferrar), Cooper's favorite FBI forensics specialist, who can virtually reconstruct in his laboratory the molecules of Laura's last minutes. Called into the investigation by Cooper to perform an autopsy, Rosenfeld positions himself over Laura's corpse, sounding a prefatory whir with the handheld drill with which, in the name of science, he intends to bore a hole in her head. He is surprised (and furious) when his state-of-the-art methods are opposed by the Twin Peaks doctor, Doc Hayward (Warren Frost), and Sheriff Harry S. Truman, both of whom knew and loved Laura. Truman is so infuriated by Albert's unfeeling detachment that he punches him, indeed so hard that Rosenfeld lands grotesquely on top of Laura in a position that suggests the perverse necrophilia inherent in the Holmesian passion. Cooper underlines the negative image by supporting Hayward and Truman against Albert's scientific enthusiasm. The body of the crime, the body of flesh, is not to be erased or commodified by logic. Cooper's expression of a belief in mind-body connection is not just theory. In his compassion for body, he *is* mind-body connection.

"Twin Peaks" redefines the detective sensibility as being as much of the body as is the corpse, not to frighten the spectator but instead to encourage him/her to play with the instability of Cooper's physicality during intensely dramatic moments. For example, when Cooper wakes up in the middle of the night with a sudden insight, he presents a ludicrous figure, with his slicked-back hair still neatly plastered together but standing straight up, at a 90-degree angle to his head. Frequently, while sifting evidence, Cooper takes time out to breathe in the aroma of the ubiquitous local Douglas firs, or to savor black coffee (see photos, p. 22), sugar doughnuts, or pie in a way that has the effect of a police car chase coming to a screeching halt to make way for a family of ducks. In "Twin Peaks," the illegibility and orneriness of the body is everywhere "in our face," minus the anxiety with which Hollywood detective films code such occurrences. Cooper's persistent sidetrips into sensuality are comic, but not frivolous. They forge a new sensibility, one in which the sensuous loses its conventional coding as a distraction to be scrupulously avoided by the hero.

In "Twin Peaks," mystery conventions that depend on the suspect nature of the sensuous world—

inevitably tied up in gender issues—are transformed. For example, in suspense films the tracking shot down a corridor paralyzes us with anxiety as it suggests an awful crisis of illegibility in the physical world, which is inevitably bound up with a fear of the feminine.[6] The long corridor is conventionally shot as if its depths, secrets, and illegibility were completely other to a masculine seeker, stimulating a positivist need for definitive control of a physicality which now seems female, fearful, and illegible. By contrast, on "Twin Peaks," the prevalence of an alternate treatment of this shot weakens both its usual gender implications and its usual definition of the relationship between the detective and the body. Sometimes a stationary camera may look down a long corridor while figures appearing in the distance come toward us as a form of energizing discovery. When Cooper and Truman meet for the first time, they are tiny figures shaking hands at the end of a very long hospital corridor. As they move toward the spectator, the long hallway is no longer claustrophobic but rather a place from which good things emerge. The friendliness of the corridor is a part of a text in which the ideal subject position is Cooper's Tibetan Method.

## Difference and the Detective

Unlike most detective screen fiction, "Twin Peaks" does not represent the hidden, the fearful, the illegible, the body, and the feminine as interchangeable concepts. Certainly the discovery of Laura's body *seems* to signal the otherness of woman as a terrifying disturbance for men, one familiar from Hollywood narratives and even from television, since the concept of Body is so supersaturated with feminine associations that femininity permeates even the seemingly neutral television presentation of an unreliable physical world. Yet, on "Twin Peaks," otherness rather quickly loses its gendered aspects. Physical disruption may alert us to difference, but here the difference is not predicated on a binary opposition between male and female, and when a female expresses difference, it is not always either frightening or unfortunate. Similarly, masculinity pointedly does not guarantee reliability, as the murderer turns out to be Laura's father, Leland Palmer. Possessed by Bob, Leland's body is unreliable, veiled, and secretive; at moments he is murderous, at other times compulsively racked by dancing and singing. His ominous difference defies ordinary gender construction. Conversely, Audrey Horne (Sherilyn Fenn), daughter of Ben Horne (Richard Beymer), the richest man in town, who also dances compulsively, is defined as Special Agent Dale Cooper's special agent.

A young girl struggling with inner longings, Audrey is, like Cooper, a seeker who has her own very special mind-body connection. Audrey's offbeat, disruptive presence as body cannot be identified in terms of the conventional distrust of the female body in a text in which Leland Palmer also exists. Moreover, it is worked into the narrative as part of her legitimate desire to participate in a world from which her father's ruthless domination of the town threatens to exclude her. When Audrey uses her body to compel a group of Norwegian businessmen to interrupt their work, she disrupts a fraud her father is perpetrating on them. When she surprises the madam of a brothel owned by her father with her ability to twist a cherry stem into a three-ring pretzel shape using only her tongue, she wins a job and the opportunity to find out more about both Laura's death and what Ben Horne has hidden from her.

Nowhere is difference more fully demystified than in Cooper's heuristic dreams. Indeed, Cooper's dream at the end of the third episode suggests that in order to deal with mystery the detective must move between masculinity and femininity in a way that obviates the whole issue of castration fears. Cooper's dream shows him "a place between two worlds": the Red Room. It is a large enclosure surrounded on all sides by billowing red drapes. Aside from these, it contains only three black art deco upholstered chairs, a torch lamp, and a Grecian white marble statue of a female nude, the floor beneath tiled in an Escher-like geometric pattern. In the dream, an aging Cooper is seated in one of the chairs. Another is occupied by a Little Man (Michael Anderson)—about three feet in height—wearing a red suit. The other chair is soon filled by Laura, as she was in life, but dressed strangely in an evening gown much like a costume from a 1940s B picture: low-cut, black velvet, deeply slit. Laura and the Little Man speak as though a 78-rpm record were playing at 33 1/3 rpm. Their gestures are enigmatic. This is particularly true of the

Little Man, who undulates as he talks, "speaking" a body language at least as meaning-laden as his dialogue, and equally hard to decipher.

Cooper looks attentive during the dream, never rises from the chair, and barely speaks. He watches the Little Man dance to repetitive, rhythmic music with a cool blues melodic line played on a saxophone. Cooper is fascinated (and ultimately tutored) by the Little Man, even though there is a lack of logic to what he says or what he does: dancing, rubbing his hands, or simply turning his back to Cooper and shaking. Similarly, Cooper's eye (and ear) is overwhelmed by a Laura who is barely understandable because of the manipulation of the sound track. She too makes illegible gestures.

At the end of the dream, Laura kisses the aged Cooper sensually and whispers in his ear, unheard by the audience. When Cooper wakes—his hair standing on end—he can only remember that Laura has solved the mystery for him. Until the middle of the second season, Cooper seeks to retrieve what he now knows. The important moment when Cooper "hears" Laura with his conscious mind will be fully discussed below. Here, we must ponder the significance of Cooper's dream for his coding as a man, and as a detective hero.

The Red Room is a place where everything that has always been true of onscreen murder mysteries—whether in the movies or on television—is inverted. Cooper's site of discovery resembles the site of crime in ordinary detective stories: a place where no action can be identified in terms of pragmatic or logical purpose. Unlike other detectives, however, Cooper discovers more from body than from mind. Rational language and action barely exist in the Red Room. Here body speaks, as it were; Laura, nothing but inert body in the "real world" of Twin Peaks, possesses the solution to her own murder and is willing and able to share it with Cooper in his dream. Unlike the femme fatale, Laura is neither sexualized nor desexualized object. She is another subject. There is pleasure when Cooper gains knowledge through merging with her—she tells him the name of her murderer when she kisses him—but the desire satisfied in this kiss is a compound of his desire to understand and her desire to communicate. Similarly, the merging of two subjects is suggested later, when we learn through a diary entry that Laura and Cooper have had identical dreams of the Red Room. As Laura is not object, she is not the detective's impediment. Cooper is hampered by his own limits. Her illegibility is not the

Laura (Sheryl Lee) tells Cooper who killed her

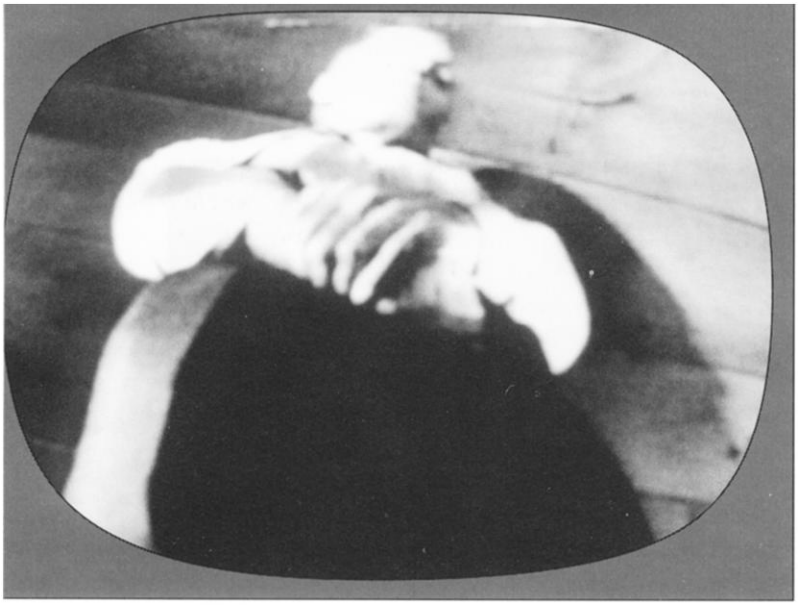
The Little Man
(Michael Anderson)
and the feminine crotch

displacement of his own, but the corollary of his need to understand his body.

In Hollywood, the secrets of femininity are conventionally distinguished from the clarity of masculinity. But, in "Twin Peaks," Laura's secrets identify her with Cooper. Her secrets are presented in tandem with those of the Little Man, whose illegibility creates intimations of masculine murkiness. This small, wiggling, dancing, rosy figure has clear phallic associations, even in being called "the Little Man." To make the association clearer, the Little Man of Cooper's dream frequently undulates in front of a Greek marble female nude such that he is often framed with the statue's crotch behind his head. (Her genital identity is emphasized by her hand, which both covers and points to it.) The existence of such a Little Man as Cooper's guide suggests that readiness to seek Laura's killer is identified with Cooper's receptivity both to her (and her ambiguity) and to the complexities of an almost illegible phallic reality.

In the Holmesian detective, the scrutinizing eye and the phallus become one, suggesting that the detective's potency transcends the unreliability of the body. In "Twin Peaks," the phallic energy of Cooper's body is readily distinguished from the logical scrutiny of his detective's eye. As in the Dream of the Red Room, insight is a product of a magic partnership between the eye and the oblique meaning of the phallic image. Cooper's logic must be put on hold in order for him to explore phallic magic. Cooper's magic phallic helpers take two forms which reflect the anatomical changeability of the male member. After the Little Man, a second phallic helper appears, a Giant (Carel Struycken).

The Giant, identified as a phallic presence in an angle-up shot foregrounding his crotch, appears to Cooper in a vision as the FBI agent lies on the floor of his hotel room, apparently bleeding to death. At the end of the first season, Cooper is shot by an unknown assassin when he opens the door to what he thinks is room service. As the second season begins, the open doorway becomes a frame highly charged with expectation while we wait for someone to enter it and come to the aid of our hero. When at last someone arrives, it is the senile Old Waiter (Hank Worden). For an agonizing but comic eternity, the doddering old man makes irrelevant small talk while Cooper asks him to get a doctor. Surprisingly, the badly wounded Cooper is not annoyed by the old man's senility and politely indulges his caprices. Cooper even returns the old fellow "a thumbs-up" as he leaves and what looks like Cooper's last chance goes out the door. Cooper lies there for a long screen minute, after which a brilliant light floods him and the Giant pays his first call. The



Crotch shot of the Giant (Carel Struycken)

Giant's speech is distorted in a way reminiscent of the Red Room. Giving Cooper several oblique clues to the mystery, he takes Cooper's ring, saying that it will be returned when Cooper finds the "things the Giant has told him to be true." We do not understand the significance of the ring until much later.

The phallic incapacity of the waiter in the "real world" plays against the stereotypes in the detective genre. A hiatus in the ordinary male potency—and logic—seems to be necessary in order for Cooper to cross a boundary and gain access to a part of himself that is impeded by the limitations of the G-Man's organizational code. Being shot, says Cooper to himself as he lies on the floor, is not as bad as people think, as long as "you can keep the fear from your mind." Indeed, he muses, "that's pretty much what life is like. O.K., as long as you can keep the fear from your mind." The vulnerability of the body is here portrayed as an advantage for Coop—not one that we would care to see pressed beyond the point of no return, but an opportunity to look at reality from an altered perspective.

Cooper's productive vacations from logic are a significant departure from the oppressive literality of American television (and films) that obsessively emphasizes phallic power to foreclose any such "lapses in virility."[7] The two forms of phallic power in conventional screen fiction are the thrusting mind/eye and the thrusting fist or gun. The idiosyncracy of "Twin Peaks" in this respect is the deferral of that forward thrust, visually emphasized by the literal emptiness of frame left by the open door to Cooper's room. We wait and wait for it to be filled by that male strike force we have been trained to expect. Only after a long hiatus do Harry and his deputies burst in, guns drawn, filling the empty door frame with the usual rescuers. In comparison with the phallic power of the Giant there is something diminished, foolish, and loveable in this conventional rescue.

But phallic onslaught is not always so benign. Indeed, on "Twin Peaks," unlimited by a commitment to law, it is the source of evil. Just before Cooper's path leads him to correctly identify Leland as Laura's murderer, MIKE tells Cooper about the rejected but not forgotten joys of his days as BOB's partner, speaks in a kind of frenzy of his experience with BOB of the Golden Circle of Appetite and Satisfaction. BOB devours life as he closes the Golden Circle to satisfy his boundless appetites. The cannibalistic aspect of this energy is all too clear to us—not from Laura's murder, which we never see, but from the death of her cousin, Maddy, which recreates the original atrocity. When we see Leland kill his niece, BOB and Leland dissolve in and out of one another during the act; the bright light common to both BOB's appearances and Cooper's waking visions reveals BOB/Leland both kissing and killing the girl, kissing her as if he were devouring her face. Phallic energy is a continuum with BOB on one end and Cooper on the other.

The Golden Circle of Appetite and Satisfaction described by MIKE to Cooper is an unusual address (possibly unheard-of on American prime-time television) to the phallocentrism that is the unacknowledged motivator of Hollywood fictions. The Golden Circle is an energy that, in returning to itself, seeks the obliteration of the feminine, whose existence threatens the closing of the masculine self-referential circle. When the Giant returns the ring to Cooper as he finally hears Laura's dream voice, the gesture celebrates Cooper's major achievement in solving the murder. Securely on his finger, the small ring indicates that the Golden Circle of Appetite is under control. In solving the mystery, Cooper restrains the energy of phallic onslaught. His reward for doing so is to hear and see once again his dream of Laura, the desirable woman whom phallocentrism has suppressed from the narrative, and to bring back her voice and her body, even though this means crossing the boundary between life and death.

## The Ups and Downs of Cooper's New Manhood

Cooper is at his zenith when he regains the ring, identifies Leland as the murderer, and effects his capture. Working far beyond the shallows of the conscious mind, Cooper has no knowledge, in the ordinary sense, of what he is doing. But as Hawk (Michael Horse), Sheriff Truman's American-Indian deputy, tells him, he doesn't need to "know." Even ultra-scientific Albert is moved by Cooper and defers to the power of Cooper's alogical ways. Cooper gives himself mind, body, and soul to the magic of his process, assembling a group of suspects, though unable to explain to anyone what he is doing. Finally, the Old Waiter speaks, echoing one of the unfathomable pronouncements of the Little Man in the Dream of the Red Room: "That gum you like is going to come back into style." The words illogically move Coop outside of time and space, Laura kisses him again, and he hears her voice identify Leland as her murderer. The Giant appears to Cooper and returns the ring, a transaction that justifies spectator faith in Cooper, creating the kind of delight that audiences take in the logic of Holmes, but without the attendant diminution of the mystery.

Like Bob's Circle of Appetite and Satisfaction, Holmes' method devours mystery. Solution means termination. In contrast, Cooper's Tibetan Method moves through the mystery to open the world for the detective and his cohorts. When Cooper and Truman trick Leland into a jail cell and Bob destroys the tormented Leland in preparation for deserting his host body, the awful wonder of the riddle at the heart of Laura's death is augmented, not diminished, by knowledge. After Bob is clearly gone, Cooper and the other "Peaksers" (my coinage) are sobered by their new knowledge of evil, but the world is not restored to its pre-mystery neatness; it is infinitely larger. This taste of infinity derives from the preceding moment, Cooper's finest, when Bob casts off Leland as his human host.

As Bob dissolves his connection with Leland, nothing remains but the broken body left behind by the crime. In Leland's final moments, as he tells the story of how Bob possessed him as a young boy, Cooper as usual sticks by the body, cradling Leland's head in his lap. The two form a Pietà, as Cooper urges Leland to move "into the light," helping the distraught man to the afterlife. This scene, created by Mark Frost, is a crystalline visual, emotional, and narrative realization of Cooper's Tibetan Method. If up until now Cooper has been alternately a stereotypical federal agent and a comic subversion of that stock character, against all logic suggesting the possibility of a new hero, at this moment he is that new hero incarnate. Cooper's ability to keep "fear from the mind" (read resistance to castration anxieties) redefines the detective as an adversary of repression and reconfigures his desire as a liberated commitment to the wholeness of life.

This moment of radiance renders excruciatingly painful Cooper's ultimate possession by Bob. In the last episode of "Twin Peaks," Cooper becomes the monster he once defeated, inverting the conventional narrative progress in which initial defeat leads to ultimate victory. Why? To explore this mystery, we must speak not only of the incidents in the "Twin Peaks" narrative, but also of the production context in which the series was created. The production elements most germane to this discussion are the long period during which Lynch neither directed nor wrote for "Twin Peaks" and the premature cancellation of the series.

After the death of Leland Palmer, the series struggled on with two handicaps: David Lynch took time out to film *Wild at Heart* and, according to Frost, Kyle MacLachlan, a co-creator of Cooper with a say in the production unusual for an actor, refused to play out the projected story of a relationship with the quirky, illegible Audrey. As a result, "Twin Peaks" turned toward a love affair for Cooper with a new, more stereotypical character in the

Cooper's double and Bob—one and the same

series, Annie Blackburne (Heather Graham), and a father-son vendetta between Cooper and Wyndham Earle (Kenneth Welsh), Cooper's former FBI mentor, gone suddenly insane.

When Lynch returned, he was surprised by and unhappy with the introduction of Earle into the series—and with justice. Unlike the conflict with Bob, Cooper's struggle with his post-Leland adversary draws the emphasis of the central story into a binary context in which outdated Holmesian logic marginalizes Cooper's unique Tibetan Method. At the same time, in these later episodes Coop is also afflicted by a kind of femme fatale, as Earle wages war on Cooper in retribution for Cooper's brief, tender love affair with Earle's wife, Caroline. Earle uses Annie, a look-alike of Caroline, as the bait in the traps he sets for Cooper to lure him onto another plane of reality where he believes he has the power to finish Cooper off. Thus, Annie Blackburne is also a step backward, a conventional female other with a body through which Cooper can be made vulnerable.

However, Lynch's return meant the reestablishment of the centrality of the mind-body connection. Lynch directed (and rewrote) the last episode, rejecting most of the script that was written for the "Twin Peaks" finale.[8] Understanding these changes may help to focus the prevalent sense that "Twin Peaks" went wrong after the death of Leland Palmer, and to focus the painful impact of the last episode.

In both the rejected script and the taped episode, the large narrative outlines are the same: Earle dies at Bob's hands on an alternate plane of reality, and Cooper and Annie return to Twin Peaks. Cooper, though no one knows it, is possessed by Bob. However, in the unused written script, the place into which Cooper is lured by Earle is less the Red Room and more a binary landscape in which Cooper is tested in a series of surreal divisions between mind and body. With the changes made by Lynch, the taped episode returns to the early emphasis in the series on productive disruptiveness of the body. To bring the series back on track, Lynch returned Cooper, Earle, and Annie to the Red Room. However, unlike Cooper's dream of the Red Room, which was an interlude of meetings that produced power and justice in the best sense, Cooper's *visit* to the Red Room is an interlude of failed and disastrous meetings. The problem is a "power failure" in Dale Cooper, as we immediately see.

When Cooper enters the Red Room looking for Earle and Annie, the dancing Little Man indicates the presence of a blues singer (Jimmy Scott). He sings to Cooper about this place as a place of vision. But the power failure in Cooper is evident as the lights flicker on and off, deepest black alternating with brilliant light that cannot illuminate anything. Dale Cooper strains his eyes in the blinking dark.

The Old Waiter appears and serves Cooper a cup of coffee that turns rock hard, back to liquid, and then to oil sludge. The Giant appears and informs Cooper that he and the Little Man are "one and the same." Laura appears, telling him that she will see him in 25 years, a reference to his original dream in which he was an older man—in this final Red Room encounter he is younger than he was in the dream—and she was the source of his knowledge. The apparitions still speak to Cooper, but he is not receptive.

Is it because the visit is initiated by Earle, bringing Cooper into the Red Room as other to Annie's body, that Cooper is more vulnerable to the devouring circle and less unified and ready to move across boundaries in an integrated way? Is this why Mark Frost says Cooper is not ready for the final confrontation in the Red Room and so fails?[9] Properly, neither Lynch nor Frost answers interpretive questions. If it is not on the screen, then . . . And what we see on the screen in the final episode is that long hallways have taken on the stock anxiety of the suspense film. As Cooper walks through the convoluted corridors of the Red Room, the Little Man says, "Wrong way." Cooper takes this literally and walks in another direction. But Cooper is approaching the Red Room *in the wrong way*. The apparitions become correspondingly negative: eyeless, they suggest castration. Laura appears to him now as violent, hostile, and dangerous—her eyes, lacking

an iris, are ominously all white. She attacks him. When Cooper runs from her, he discovers he is bleeding. Even the Little Man appears as a snarling figure. The iconography of vacant eyes and growling phallus suggests an experience of emptiness where once there was fullness. The benign meeting of subjects has turned into the hostile encounter of subject and object. The bleeding contrasts with Cooper's previous wound, when there was no fear and there was vision.

Appropriately, when Cooper finally finds Earle, he suffers almost nothing at this opponent's hands. Earle is almost immediately dispatched by a laughing Bob in a puff of flame and smoke. Earle's stereotypical scenarios are properly subordinate problems in the world of "Twin Peaks"; the real problem is that Earle has brought forth in Cooper a part of himself that is literal rather than visionary, divorced from rather than in league with the body. Thus Cooper's real nemesis in the Red Room is a demented white-eyed double of himself, who, in collaboration with Bob and a white-eyed Leland, forces Cooper into a Sartrean game of tag through the red-curtained corridors. Cooper is losing his power to cross boundaries; his mind has succumbed to fear. As we discover in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me,* the "good Dale" remains trapped in the Red Room, unable to leave. The man who returns to Twin Peaks is the lesser aspect of Dale Cooper.

Abruptly expelled from the Red Room, the Cooper double, at first unconscious and bleeding, seems himself again as, reviving in his own room, he voices concern for the similarly wounded Annie. But then, assured by Truman that she is going to be fine, Cooper incongruously announces that he wants to brush his teeth. This comic dislocation of a tense moment seems to herald Cooper's return to mind-body connection. But nothing could be further from the truth. Once behind the closed bathroom door, Cooper squeezes the toothpaste tube into the sink until it is empty, and, at the very moment of this image—an image suggesting castration in a moment of impotence—the spectator sees Cooper look into the mirror and discover not his own heroic face but the monstrous, leering image of Bob. Bloodying his forehead against the mirror image (see photo, p. 23), the Cooper double burlesques his earlier concern: "How's Annie? How's Annie? How's Annie?" Each rendition is more a parody of human connection than the one before.

When Cooper loses his former grasp of connection, chaos ensues. "Things get kind of slippery" in the Red Room, as Lynch says.[10] The continuum of phallic energy folds over easily, and phallocentric perversion is an ever-present danger for even the best and brightest of detectives. Cooper's readiness for mystery is finally about avoiding phallocentrism, which is here identified with alienation from the world's body and with castration. When Cooper loses that readiness, no femme fatale is responsible. Neither too much closeness with women nor too much involvement in the world is the primary threat to masculinity. Instead, the image of castration attends both the division of the hero from his body and his fall into masculine contempt for the feminine. In Cooper's triumphs and defeat, Lynch and Frost dramatically re-vision the classical case for the difficulties of human encounter with reality.[11] Oh, the pity and fear of that final glance in the mirror!

■ Martha Nochimson teaches at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York, and at the Tisch School of the Arts at NYU. She is the author of *No End to Her: Soap Opera and The Female Subject* (University of California Press, 1993).

## Notes

1. Interview with David Lynch, January 31, 1992. All subsequent references to Lynch in this article are drawn from this interview.
2. Mary Ann Doane gives an excellent overview of the castration anxiety with which Hollywood saturates the body of the femme fatale: "an articulation of the fears surrounding the loss of stability and centrality of the self, the 'I,' the ego. . . . " Mary Ann Doane, *Femme Fatales* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 2.
3. Jim Collins has made a brief and useful foray into applying the concept of televisual flow to "Twin Peaks" in his essay "Postmodernism and Television," in Robert C. Allen, ed., *Channels of Discourse, Reassembled* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 341–49. For an extended consideration of the concept see E. Ann Kaplan, "Feminism/Oedipus/Postmodernism: The Case of MTV," in E. Ann Kaplan, ed., *Postmodernism and Its Discontents: Theories, Practices* (New York: Verso, 1988), pp. 30–44.
4. Interview with Robert Engels, October 18, 1991; interview with Mark Frost, November 22, 1991. All subsequent references to Engels and Frost in this article are drawn from these interviews.
5. Interview with Richard Hoover, September 3, 1991.
6. See Pascal Bonitzer for a treatment of the psychological implications of the tracking shot in "Partial Vision: Film

and the Labyrinth," translated by Fabrice Siolkowski, *Wide Angle*, vol. 4, no. 4 (1981), pp. 58–59.

7. Tania Modleski is especially helpful on the subject of the repressive construction of male identity through literality in "Lethal Bodies: Thoughts on Sex, Gender, and Representation from the Mainstream to the Margins," in *Feminism Without Women: Culture and Criticism in a "Postfeminist" Age* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 135–64.
8. David Lynch graciously granted me a copy of the projected last script of the series, "Twin Peaks" #29. According to Lynch, there is no written version of the last episode as taped.
9. Frost's suggestion that Cooper is "not ready" for his forced entrance into the Red Room at the end of the series is even more interesting in light of Linda Williams' classification of body genres in film. With reference to one of these body genres, the horror film, Williams explores its address to a male adolescent castration anxiety: "body too early!," as she says. Williams comments on how typically the physical terror of horror films is coded onto feminine bodies in "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre, and Excess," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 4 (Summer 1991), pp. 5–9. "Twin Peaks'" unconventionality is demonstrated by the way the horror of "body too early!" is Cooper's perceptual, not sexual failure, and it is directly coded onto his body. The issue of "body too early!" is reexamined from Laura's perspective in the film *Fire Walk With Me*, where, once again, it is made clear that she is *not* the horror but her father's displacement of his self-loathing onto her. In the movie, the "good" Cooper who remains in the Red Room is presented in terms of the relation to body I explore here as a cosmic consoling presence for her.
10. Lynch is willing to say that the Red Room has its own rules. But he did not say much more to me than that bodies are not the same there as they are in the "real" world. He did, however, respond to my question, "Are those who appear in the Red Room sequence projections?" saying, "I think they're real." Enlarging on this, he added that those places in the Red Room segment where split-second images of various characters appear to emerge from one another should be construed as lots of people running around the same room as the lights are blinking on and off. To me, this suggests that, in the Red Room, more than one body may occupy the same space at the same time and supports my reading of Lynch's detective as one who can only function if he is not fearful of physical indeterminacy.
11. Frost is eloquent on the subject of the equation between the self-referential and evil, an equation clearly evident in "Twin Peaks." The villainy of Bob and Wyndham Earle are both rooted in self-reference. So too the disastrous fall of Dale Cooper. Images of sinister, sterile, circular self-reference, which seem to be metaphors for the "Golden Circle of Appetite and Satisfaction," include a whirring ceiling fan that dominates scenes in which Laura's mother remembers learning of Laura's death and a record player revolving meaninglessly after the record has finished, just before Maddy is killed by Leland/Bob.


*Announcing*

**Smithsonian Studies in the History of Film and Television**

*Charles Musser, Series Editor*

This new series will examine the place and function of film and television within societies, cultures, and ideologies, emphasizing the historical contexts in which these media developed.

**MR. SMITH GOES TO TOKYO**

**Japanese Cinema under the American Occupation, 1945–1952**

*Kyoko Hirano*

*A Toast to the Young Miss (Here's to the Girls).* 1949, directed by Keisuke Kinoshita. Photo courtesy of Kawakita Memorial Film

"Stimulating and important. . . . A significant contribution to film history."—Robert Sklar, Professor of Cinema, New York University

Through an analysis of such classics as Akira Kurosawa's *No Regrets for Our Youth* (1946), Hirano exposes how the occupation government effectively used the Japanese film industry to serve its own ends: to inculcate democratic principles, to guard against a return to militarism, and, ultimately, to create a trustworthy ally in the Pacific. Hirano makes extensive use of censored screenplays, a few hundred films, and interviews with Japanese directors, producers, and writers, as well as declassified occupation-government documents.

64 b&w illus. 400 pp. Cloth: 1-56098-157-1 $34.95

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION PRESS
Dept. 900 • Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0900
800/782-4612 • 717/794-2148

NEW FROM DUKE

**Classical Hollywood Narrative**

**The Paradigm Wars**

Jane Gaines, editor

"This collection is of exceptional importance. . . . Nearly every one of the essays involves work on the cutting edge of a cross-section of disciplines. . . . It will obviously appeal to those working in cinema and television studies; but it will be of interest to others working more generally in cultural studies and women's studies."—Richard Abel, author of *French Film Theory and Criticism, 1907–1939*

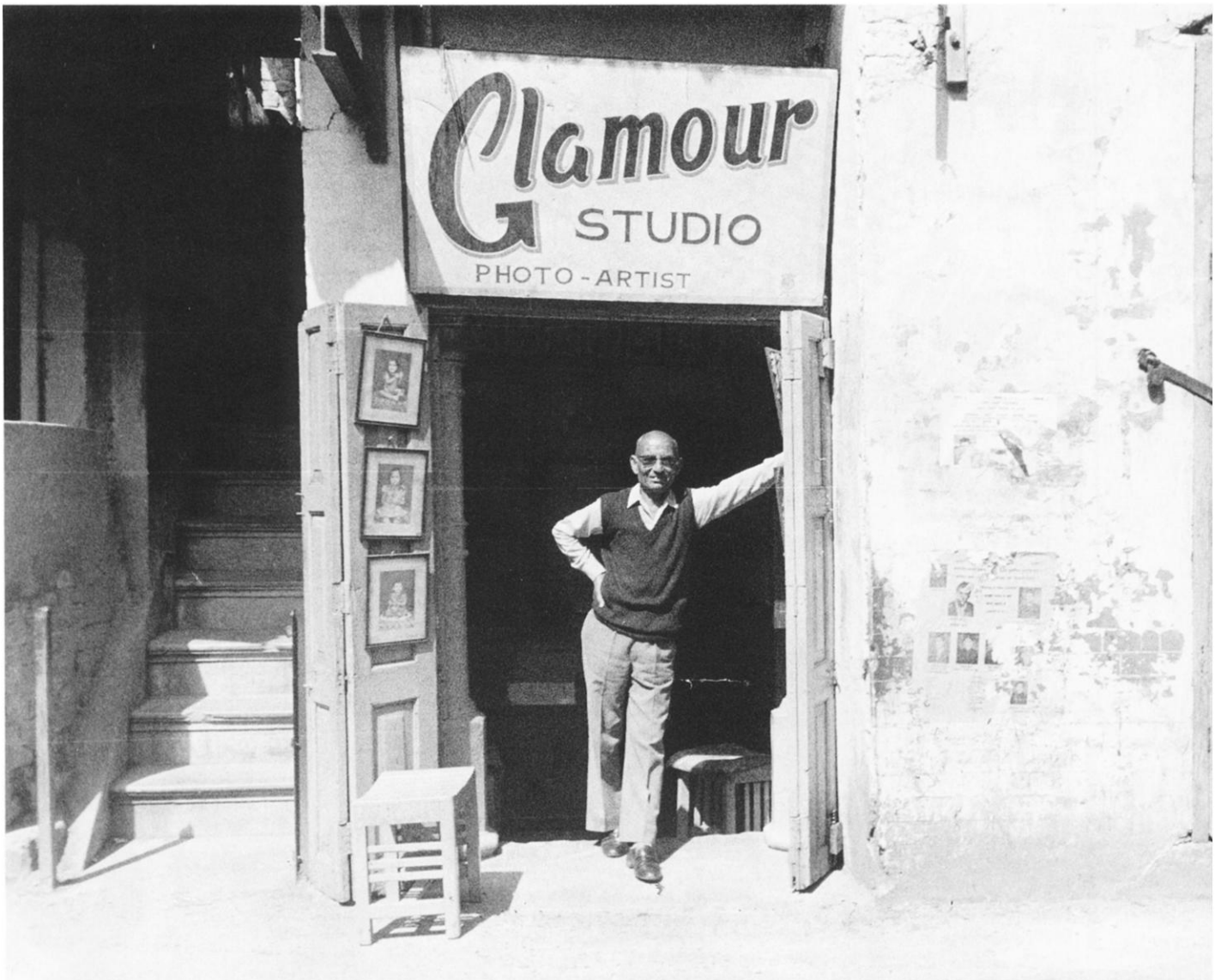
360 pages, 10 illustrations, paper $15.95, library cloth edition $45.00

Duke University Press
Box 90660
Durham, NC 27708-0660

**Film Quarterly**
**Vol. 46, No. 2 [pp. 36-46]**
**When Less Is Less: The Long Take in Documentary**

Please note: Due to the formatting of the original print version, this article's title does not appear on the following page. No content is missing from the article, and its pages are presented in the correct sequential order.

**Please click on "Next Page" (at the top of the screen) to begin viewing this article.**




There is a hidden problem in documentary film—the problem of the long camera take and what to do with it. With the exception of interview material, most of the shots in contemporary documentary films and television programs are only a few seconds long. This is in marked contrast to fiction films and television dramas, in which whole scenes are sometimes played out in a single shot. Documentary thus finds itself in the curious company of television commercials and music videos in seeking to maintain audience interest through the dynamics and variety of quick cutting. The long take has become the *terra incognita* of the modern documentary film, a blank space in a practice which devotes itself almost entirely to other properties of the shot. And this is contrary to its heritage, for documentary was born in the pleasures of watching such ordinary events as leaves shimmering on a tree or a train arriving at a station.

Not long ago I spent eight months filming in the streets of a small town in northern India. The finished film is intentionally one of counterpoints and disjunctions and not at all a smoothly flowing narrative.[1] Yet while I was filming, something odd occurred which I still don't fully understand. I began to shoot a kind of "shadow" film alongside the main film. This notional film—notional because it remains unmade—consists of long camera takes which quite clearly could never have been used in the main film. My justification for shooting these long takes

*David MacDougall*

*Photo Wallahs* (1991)—A film by David and Judith MacDougall

# When Less Is Less

## The Long Take in Documentary

was that we could at least extract and use pieces of them. But in the back of my mind they actually constituted an alternative film, a counter-film to the one we were making. They formed a necessary antidote, a way of holding on to qualities which are so often lost when a film is structured for its likely audiences. I remember thinking at the time: "Is it possible to go back to zero, to film as if the cinema has just been invented? What would it be like to work like Louis Lumière when he first set up his camera on the street?"

Some of these long takes last five or six minutes (200 feet of 16mm); none are shorter than a minute or two. To watch these shots one must suspend one's usual moviegoing and television-watching expectations. But these expectations serve as a frame of reference for what I want to discuss here.

Like a spark or a stab of lightning, a shot discharges most of its meaning at once, within the first few microseconds of appearing on the screen. If we close our eyes after that first instant, the meaning survives. The mind arrests it like the shutter of a camera. What follows in our response may be very different—a sudden adherence to something happening within the shot, or a kind of coasting perusal. Or so it can be if the shot continues. But most shots are not allowed to. In film-making few shots are used in their entirety. Most are shot long and cut short.

Christopher Pinney has argued that still photographs are more indeterminate than films, offering

the viewer more because they dictate meanings less. Social scientists in particular, he suggests, are afraid of still photographs and prefer film because "still images contain *too many meanings* whereas the desirability of film lies precisely in its ability to constrain meaning through narrative chains of signification. . . . They close off plural readings in the temporal flow of succession and destruction."[2] The temporal and sequential structure of film thus "provides a fortification against undesirable and 'unwarranted' readings."[3]

But applying this argument to film itself produces a curious reversal of Pinney's observations. Short camera takes resemble still photographs in their fixing of a single image, but by their very brevity they disallow the kind of perusal of the image over time permitted by photographs and by longer takes. Longer takes, which create sequential chains and the narrative cloistering of meanings, also undermine these very meanings by leaving the viewer more time to ignore or challenge them. It can thus be said that the long take comes eventually to resemble the still photograph more closely than the short take, at least in these "lexical" properties.

Just as shots may be short or long, so there are short films, long films, and occasionally very long films which are rarely seen. While no one would argue that how one reads entire films is analogous to how one reads individual shots, there is perhaps a connection between the visual context within which a shot is framed and the footage from which a finished film is extracted. Dai Vaughan writes of an ideal cinema, never to be fully achieved because tending toward an impossible conflation, "something which would attain to a narrative significance whilst remaining random."[4] The films that have come closest for him have been certain documentary films for television shot in cinéma-vérité or long-take style: "Not the rushes, yet not the fine cuts and most certainly not the transmitted versions with their cellophane wrap of commentary and captions and studio presentation, but the films as they stood when their narrative structures had just begun to emerge with the patient chipping away of the surrounding substance, yet were still perceptibly of its density and of its mass."[5]

I want to examine this problem of the ideal and the actual, the object within grasp yet somehow lost, and draw a broad analogy between the way in which shots are reduced in length in films and the way in which an entire body of footage shot for a film is reduced to produce the finished film. On the way I hope to question some of the assumptions which underlie these practices.

## Disquiet in Documentary

Long takes were not always the exception. In the early days of the cinema, when all films consisted of a single shot, they were the norm. Louis Lumière's first films ran for up to a full minute uncut—the length of a roll of film at the time. Some of Georges Demeny's shots (filmed in the 60mm gauge as early as 1895) ran to 40 seconds. That is very long by today's standards, even in fiction films,[6] although a few directors (Jancsó, Jarmusch) have created distinctive styles around very long takes. In television documentary the average length of a shot is closer to five seconds, excepting interviews and "talking-head" presentations. These shots tend to be cut automatically at the point where it is assumed audience attention drops, or where there is any suggestion of a pause in narrative flow.

The great enemy of documentary (and oddly, rather a taboo topic of discussion among film-makers themselves) is the "dead spot" in which nothing seems to be happening. Film producers are terrified of such moments, for they are terrified of audience impatience.[7] I suspect that the taboo status of this topic goes back to an inherent contradiction in documentary principles. In the early days of cinéma vérité and Direct Cinema, the prevailing ideology had it that dead spots weren't supposed to exist. Ordinary life was deemed to be interesting and worthy of everyone's attention. But documentary film-makers still contrived to avoid dramaturgical dead spots, cutting around them or focusing on exciting events and famous people. Documentary, whatever its ideology, still took its shape from fiction or journalism. It had to defend its interest in the ordinary by making sure that the ordinary played well. There was a tacit understanding that you didn't talk publicly about this. Who cared to admit that documentary actually concealed the lacunae characteristic of ordinary life and chose only the best bits, just like the fiction film-makers?

What constitutes a "long take" is obviously an artificial and somewhat arbitrary concept, formed in relation to an average notion of shot length and affected by content and position as well as by

duration. Long takes are perhaps better defined by their structural qualities than by their length. Does the shot, for example, form an entire sequence in the film, or is it merely part of a more extended, edited sequence? In this analysis, the term "long take" refers more to a method of film construction than to actual length. Brian Henderson has pointed out that although Murnau uses a long-take style, his shots are actually quite short.[8] In his films the viewer's attention tends to be focused more upon developments within shots than upon linkages between them.

It is also evident that shots of long duration are not necessarily more revealing than if they had been shorter—for example, shots of repetitive activities or shots containing limited information which is rapidly grasped by the viewer. It is no use comparing generically different materials. Duration is perhaps the least important criterion in comparing a static, practically empty frame and a frame crowded with activity. And yet . . . and yet, as I shall argue later, absolute duration does finally matter. It is not wholly subjective and has its own measure of influence upon our reading of shots.

## The Viewing of Images

It seems almost self-evident that how long we look at an image affects what we see in it and how we interpret it. Even if there were no other evidence of this, it has been shown that the eye successively scans an image in a series of fixations. If the time for doing this is cut short, the eye fixes on fewer points and the mind creates a less extensive version of what David Marr has called the "primal sketch."[9] In talking about viewing film images it is useful to place the process in the context of viewing practices generally. How does film-viewing differ from viewing other kinds of images, such as still photographs?

Sometimes the length of time we devote to a still photograph is determined for us, as when a train we are on flashes by a billboard with a photograph on it. The frequency with which we view photographs is also often beyond our control: it is the aim of advertisers to expose us to the same pictures as often as possible, although many photographs, such as those in newspapers, we see only once, and then usually briefly. Others, such as family snapshots, may be seen again and again—and we may choose to study them for quite long periods.

When we watch films we exchange the role of private consumer of images for that of public participant at a spectacle. Our choices become more limited. Not only are the still photographs of the film regulated to 24 or 25 per second, but the length of time we have to view each shot is precisely dictated. We thus surrender an important part of our control over the image, although not all of it. There is still the possibility of searching the shot and interpreting it to some degree independently—for example, by looking for "peripheral detail."[10] How we interpret it depends upon who we are and what assumptions we bring to it. This is a fertile process, the text of the film interacting with the texts of personality, culture, and society that define us. Despite that, there are habits of film-viewing which will hold broadly true for audiences with a shared set of cultural expectations. If the following description is in any way recognizable, it is because it applies to a quite specific set of film-making and film-viewing conventions.

## Responding to the Shot

For Western, middle-class viewers (at least), the initial response to a shot is determined both by its content and placement in the context of the film and by various plastic and compositional elements of the shot itself. The audience, from its grasp of the context, quickly identifies the intended center of signification of the shot. In a typical character-centered film, for example, imagine that a person whom we have already seen walks down a street and encounters a stranger. Our attention attaches to this person, is then transferred to the stranger, and then perhaps shifts back again to the familiar character. We take in certain background details, but we identify the primary meaning of the shot as residing in what happens to the major character. This primary meaning—perhaps related to what Eisenstein termed the "dominant"—need not be a person, or even a specific visual object. For example, a slow pan over a city may simply signify "a sunny morning in San Francisco" (as in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, 1958).

Dramatic films thus extend to us a challenge which is a little like a game. We are invited to

participate in creating the meaning of each shot by recognising its narrative or expository center. The length of the shot is gauged so that we must carry this out fairly quickly, leaving little time for other considerations. This contrast between a centered meaning and other coded and uncoded information in the shot may be thought of as a figure-ground relationship. What is identified as figure, and what as ground, is a result of placement and, as Nick Browne has shown for sequences of shots, may also shift and depend upon duration. Previously noted details may be brought forward retrospectively by a new context. Centered meanings may be forgotten in a process Browne calls "fading."[11]

However, there is a certain threshold of narrative or expository efficiency beyond which the motivated meaning of the shot is exhausted. If the shot unexpectedly remains on the screen without further developments, we may feel impatience or annoyance, during which we perhaps look away or withdraw our attention. If the shot continues still longer we may move to a third stage of what might be called "digressive search," when we begin to bring a very different and more idiosyncratic kind of interpretive process to bear upon the shot. In films like Andy Warhol's *Sleep* (1963) and *Blow-Job* (1964) our expectations are deliberately confounded and we are provoked into supplying the images with meaning. Audiences, however, are generally asked to stretch the rules only so far. And when they are asked to do so they are usually offered compensations.

How we respond to a shot is shaped not only by our conventional expectations but also by the rules that the film itself establishes. In Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), for instance, shots early in the film are purposely lengthened considerably beyond the norms of Hollywood editing. The result is that when the climaxes come we accept that they develop at an almost dreamlike pace.

The viewing of film shots may also be affected by largely neurophysiological processes which are still not well understood. There may be a point at which the recognition of any sign becomes subject to a certain cognitive loss or slippage. For example, after a period of time our attention may automatically shift from a particular visual figure or thematic focus to "ground" or background material. This process may be related to the directional switching that occurs when we study the diagram of a cube, or to the experience of figure-ground switching familiar from such examples in Gestalt psychology as seeing a picture alternately as a vase or two symmetrical faces. It may have to do with the different functions of the two hemispheres of the brain, or with the way in which different cells in the visual cortex respond to highly specific shapes in the environment.[12] It is possible that digressive search is triggered by such processes, so that a search for alternative configurations and meanings follows the "saturation" of an initial act of recognition.[13]

Such a schematic description of how we read film images cannot, of course, pretend to deal with the many convolutions of pattern recognition or the kinds of layered responses that may be part of reading the denotative and connotative content of complex images.

## From Rushes to Films

Few documentary film-makers would deny that their films are highly selective and expressive of a particular culture and ideology. At the same time, when film-makers measure their films against their experience of the world they often find them lacking. What has recently been referred to as a "crisis of representation" in a broad spectrum of human studies has resulted from just such a sense of discrepancy between experience and the existing paradigms for representing it.[14] Such an intellectual climate may now encourage film-makers to pursue this sense of discrepancy a little further.

It is true that documentary film-makers have periodically questioned the inherited assumptions of their vocation. This has happened notably around the years 1935, 1960, and 1975. Ethnographic film-makers, in their brushes with other arts and rhetorics, have perhaps been particularly inclined to do so. But even they have seemed unwilling to confront perhaps the most deeply seated assumption of all: that films are necessarily superior to the raw materials shot for them.

Despite this, it is not uncommon to hear film-makers say: "The real film was in the rushes." I have an instance of this from Roger Graef, the maker of many documentary films for British television. In an interview with Alan Rosenthal he says, "In one film we shot 100,000 16mm feet. That's fifty hours. . . . These vérité films are usually best in the rushes. All fifty hours tend to be interesting. It's like a long-running serial. Strangers wandering through our

viewing rooms tend to sit there and come back, and back, and back because they want to know what's going to happen next. It's got that kind of excitement to it. There *is* a problem in structuring them. The films tend to be next best at something like six or eight hours. . . . And then there's a terrible problem because all of the subplots, all the nuances, all the things that aren't going to survive, but do feed the sense of reality, all have to be cut."[15]

There is in descriptions like this, and in the experience of many film-makers, a pervasive sense of loss which is not about a quantitative difference but a qualitative one. It is as though once a film has been pruned to achieve what it actually sets out to achieve—a coherent narrative or analysis—certain qualities perceived in the rushes have been edited out of it. This contradicts the accepted notion of creative economy that "less is more," and "the work is greater than the sum of its parts." The feeling seems to be that the work has clearly become less than the sum of its parts. It is not merely a reduced semblance of the longer work but has been reduced in other important ways in achieving its final statements.

This is not to revert to the naïve view that film footage is some kind of unmediated evidence which contains the "truth" about external reality. If that were so there would be little point going beyond the rushes themselves. It would also deny that editing does in fact introduce its own higher order of truth and understanding. Rather, the sense of loss seems to identify positive values perceived in the rushes and intended by the film-maker at the time of shooting but unachieved in the completed film. It is as though the very reasons for making films are somehow contradicted by the making of them. The processes of editing a film from the rushes involve both reducing the length overall and cutting most shots to shorter lengths. I believe there is a connection between these two processes, in that they both progressively center particular meanings. Sometimes film-makers appear to recognise this when they try to preserve some of the qualities of the rushes in their films, or reintroduce those qualities through other means.

Much of what is lost from the rushes is a sense of the historical contingency of the images—the actual conditions under which films (and meaning) are produced. Film rushes are as much a chronicle of a film's production as they are of its supposed subject. The excitement Graef describes—of wondering what will happen next—is really the excitement of sensing that in the rushes *anything* can happen next. While finished films suggest a past tense, rushes seem to unfold in the present tense of a camera running. What editing removes are the stigmata of this historical moment. The shots that remain have been domesticated. They are neither tangential nor contradictory nor incontinent nor otherwise incapable of being marshalled to the film's purpose.

What does one lose then, from the rushes? One loses, I think, qualities of spaciousness, context, and historicity, and these can be described in four different ways.

## Qualities Sacrificed to the Film

First, one loses *excess meaning*—meaning in excess of what the film expresses and requires. This is not merely what remains unexplored in the subject that can still be found in the rushes, but all material which escapes from what might be called the "economy of signification" of the film.

Second, there is a loss of *interpretive space*—a closing-off of the legitimate areas in which the viewer is invited to supply meaning. The film dictates a certain standard of relevancy. As it moves toward its final form, the background around the centered subject is gradually whittled away. This controls the viewer's relationship to the footage in two ways: first, the background is made to appear incidental and subservient to what the film designates as a sufficient reality. Second, the background itself is physically thinned out by cutting, thus further reducing the opportunities for "irrelevant" intervention. Although different films provide different kinds of interpretive space for the viewer, this space often merely allows the audience to endorse the film-maker's meaning rather than to participate more actively in creating it. Viewers of rushes, by contrast, constantly interject their own interpretations.

Third, there is a loss of the *sense of encounter*. As the film becomes a polished, professional work, its connections with the historical act of filming, which were so evident in the rushes, gradually disappear. This is especially true of television documentaries, which typically begin with a title se-

quence whose purpose is to characterise the program as a fully packaged (and therefore predigested) institutional product.

Fourth, there is a loss of *internal contextualisation*. In editing a film to its final length there is an inevitable loss of material which would otherwise clarify and extend the meaning of the material which is retained.

Throughout the editing process there is a constant tension between maintaining the forward impetus of the film and providing enough contextual information so that the central narrative or argument continues to make sense. As the film becomes shorter, the analysis becomes cruder. Film-makers continually sacrifice footage which they know would permit a more complex understanding of the subject but which, for reasons of length, the film cannot afford. To solve this problem, such gaps and elisions are often roughly patched over with spoken voice-over commentary.

## The World Within the Shot

Films and shots are complex structures, each evoking a larger world. Just as there are levels of contextual material within the footage shot for a film, so there are levels of contextualisation within the shot itself. Loss of context can occur in discarding footage, but it can also occur when individual shots are made shorter.

Film-makers are aware of this. Sometimes they include an occasional long take simply to reinject into their film some of the qualities perceived in the rushes. But for a few film-makers the long take becomes a way of redefining the terms in which the film addresses its audience. Such an approach does not necessarily imply a realist aesthetic of the kind championed by André Bazin and many of the Italian neorealists. Brian Henderson notes this in the case of Ophuls,[16] whose long takes can be highly choreographed, and in the case of Godard. He describes a long take in Godard's *La Chinoise* (1967), which tracks past the shacks of Algerian workers in Nanterre to a modern university complex. "Eisenstein," he writes, "would have cut from a shot of the one to a shot of the other, making the juxtaposition for the viewer, obliterating time and space relations to make a clearcut social relation. Godard observes the time and space relation and lets the viewer make the social relation. . . . He does this by virtue of the long take's continuity of dramatic space and time, which this usage reveals as itself a form of argumentation or demonstration; the shot has its own internal relations, its own logic. This instance of the shot seems Bazinian but, far from fidelity to the real, Godard rips this bit of footage from its grounding in the real and puts it down in the midst of a highly abstract film essay."[17]

In this shot Godard uses a long take to create what Walter Benjamin called a "dialectical image"—an internal contextualisation of a specific kind, in which one foreground element is qualified by another. But long takes permit contextualisation of several kinds. They reveal relationships which link foreground with background, they reemphasize the objective presence of disparate physical objects in the shot, and they provide the "stage" for the enactment of human behavior which reveals individual identity.

*Foreground/Background Relationships:* A simple instance of linking between foreground and background within a shot is the way in which a moving camera defines the geography of a space. The perception of spatial relations is always a problem in the cinema because of the monocular vision of the camera, but by shifting the perspective, camera movement allows us to make sense of these relations. This movement must of necessity occur over time. A similar kind of spatial linking is produced by the quite different movement of people or objects *within* the frame. Thus the long take may be crucial to defining the geographical context within which a character exists or an action takes place. It is also obviously important in delineating actual matters of time, such as how long it takes someone to perform a particular task—something which is normally masked by the condensation of edited sequences.

Long takes can also reveal the relations between simultaneous actions and co-existing objects in one setting. These may be complex personal interactions or (as in the Godard example) connections between people and their surrounding social and economic environment. The objective conditions and historical processes which shape people's lives may often be more effectively demonstrated by appearing in the same frame than by being shown in the juxtapositions of editing, provided we are given a sufficient intellectual framework for interpreting

them. This interpretation may require a conscious *reapplication of detail* from the margins of the film to its center.

*The Persistence of the Physical:* As I have mentioned, we sometimes subject an image to a process of digressive search. We inspect details which escape the film's inscriptions of meaning, resisting what Roger Cardinal calls the "fixation on congruity." Such details can play a role in film which goes beyond either the pleasures of discovery or a merely supportive "authenticity."

Realist documentaries have tended to rely on background detail to legitimate their choice of what is significant in the foreground, just as historical dramas provide set dressing of the proper period to make us accept their version of history. The long take, however, can serve the opposite purpose: to assert the independence and autonomy of a physical, "background" world and the constantly shifting relations, or lack of them, between material and social being. Presented in this way, physical objects reassert their stubborn and oblivious existence—what Barthes would call their "obtuse" presence. They may even appear as surreal, not because they invoke the irrational or the unconscious, but because they force upon us recognition and confrontation with the unnamed and the unremarked.

*The Dimensions of Personhood:* Finally, the long take can make possible a contextualising behavior which may be essential to recognising individual human identity. Over time, details about other human beings accumulate for us and eventually coalesce into distinct personalities. There is perhaps a parallel here with John Berger's distinction between the private photograph, produced and consumed in a context of familiarity, and the public photograph, torn out of its context and presented to strangers.[18] The challenge for the photographer, says Berger, is to restore context to the public photograph.

In daily life it is our observation of people over time which causes us to transform undifferentiated strangers (or human types) into known individuals. Film shots, unlike still photographs, can provide the necessary time frame in which sequences of behavior can unfold, allowing us to distinguish what Gombrich calls the "likeness" from the "mask." Likenesses emerge as continuities in the midst of variations. According to Gombrich, "[T]he film shot can never fail as signally as the snapshot can, for even if it catches a person blinking or sneezing the sequence explains the resulting grimace which the corresponding snapshot may leave uninterpretable."[19]

In documentary, the long take can help redress the decontextualisation of the fragmentary public image, or in Berger's terms, restore the context of the private. Such recontextualisation can be seen clearly in ethnographic films, which for much of their history have defined people of non-Western cultures by their roles or occupations, as anonymous actors in exotic social mechanisms. They were almost always mask, never likeness. Longer camera takes with synchronous sound and subtitled dialogue provided a means of refiguring the relationship between the person on the screen and the viewer. More effective than narrative or other humanising strategies, it was these uninterrupted passages of behavior which, despite cultural differences, gave the necessary clues to discovering the person within the indigenous social actor.

## Long-Take Prospects

The long take has been associated with the very earliest motion pictures and with two recent periods in the history of documentary. In the cinéma-vérité and Direct Cinema films of the 1960s it was used to record extended events and conversations. In the political and biographical films of the 1970s and 1980s it was used largely to record interviews. These latter films were strongly influenced by television journalism, which produced its own special use of the long take in building programs around eminent talking heads. The long take proved equally serviceable in discovering these heads in European cathedrals, on Andean railway journeys, or amidst the flora and fauna of African jungles.

In each of these cases, the long take has been used for quite specific and, arguably, quite narrow purposes. Even so, some of these uses have been equivocal or self-contradictory. In the period of cinéma vérité and Direct Cinema an important model for documentary was Italian neorealist cinema—films like *La Terra Trema* (1948) and *Umberto D* (1952), which themselves borrowed ideas from earlier styles of documentary. But the attempt to reproduce in documentaries the literary qualities of fiction (as in *Salesman*, 1969) tended to confine the use of the long take to largely narrative, quasi-fictive, or

authenticating functions. Paradoxically, many of the other potentialities of the long take—for articulating space and time, relating people to their environment, exploring human personality—were being more adventurously investigated in fiction, in the work of directors like Godard, Antonioni, Resnais, and Rossellini. In the second period of interview-based documentaries, the long take seems to have been devoted almost entirely to creating an oral narrative and establishing the authority of the interviewees.

There have of course been alternative tendencies and exceptions to this pattern. Leacock's *Queen of Apollo* (1970), Rouch's *Tourou et Bitti* (1971), Wiseman's *Hospital* (1970), and Kildea's *Celso and Cora* (1983) all use long takes in distinctive and sometimes idiosyncratic ways. Experimental (and "underground") films have provided other kinds of explorations. One should include here, along with the films of Andy Warhol, the work of Michael Snow, Stan Brakhage, and Trinh T. Minh-ha. In other recent documentaries, film-makers like Amos Gitai and Claude Lanzmann have used the long take to subvert the traditional construction of foreground and background. However, for most film-makers there remain serious obstacles to developing these possibilities. Film length is one of them. Films must either conform to conventional lengths, using fewer shots, or develop into much longer films. But who will watch longer films, especially if they willfully include the dreaded "dead spots" of ordinary life as legitimate content?

Segmentation suggests one possible strategy. There have been a number of experimental documentary series for television, such as Craig Gilbert's *An American Family* (1972), Roger Graef's *Police* (1982), and Melissa Llewelyn-Davies' *Diary of a Maasai Village* (1984), but so far these have tended to reproduce in documentary the interlocking story structures of drama series or have been composed of essentially self-contained episodes. In neither case has segmentation led to a noticeable expansion of conventional film time to allow for longer takes.

Ultimately the problem of film length is related to the larger problem of how to articulate longer shots to produce meanings. Without commentary, conventional documentary editing usually finds long takes intractable unless they are tracing a clear narrative line, as in Graef's films. Using longer takes gives fewer opportunities to signify by means of the cuts between them. Longer takes are also likely to be complex entities, creating problems of intellectual focus. They characteristically contain ambiguities, interruptions, and competing centers of attention. The content is mingled in ways which make it difficult for the film-maker to isolate "signal" from "noise." In scripted fiction, "noise" is generally present only when it is put there on purpose to create verisimilitude, but documentary footage is rarely so tidy. Voice-over commentary has traditionally provided one means of superimposing meanings upon such material, but always at the cost of distancing it and reducing the viewer's engagement with its physical immediacy.

These obstacles are of course only obstacles in the context of a specific set of film-making conventions and viewing practices. The real test is whether long takes can find a place in quite new communicative structures. New technologies and shifts in popular culture at least open up certain possibilities for this to happen.

First, viewers' expectations of films are likely to change as some film-making practices which are now marginal enter the mainstream. This could alter the ways in which people actually "read" long camera takes. At the moment, the tendency in commercials and music video seems toward ever shorter takes, but this could contribute to a greater tolerance for associative, non-narrative editing and eventually for more films patterned on structures other than conventional stories or arguments. Films may emerge which require greater retrospective reconstruction in the mind. Against this current must be put the way in which the formats of television journalism seem actually to have narrowed the structural repertoire of documentary.

Second, unexplored opportunities exist for combining words with images, perhaps especially with long takes. One could cite the use of multiple voices on the sound track, voices used in less regular patterns, voices addressing us in new registers. There is no equivalent in documentary, so far as I know, to the whispered commentary which accompanies live golf telecasts. Words may also be deployed more effectively in titles and intertitles, as they once were in Soviet silent films and have been occasionally since, in such films as *The Village of Furuyashiki* (1982), by Shinsuke Ogawa. The history of documentary contains other experiments worth examining and pressing further, such as the

use of spoken verse in the documentaries of the 1930s. One might expect certain parallel developments to evolve from the emergence of rap videos.

Third, one can imagine more complex layerings of sound and image. As precedents one can point to Godard's "middle period" films (*British Sounds*, 1969), Clément Perron's *Day After Day* (1962), and several of Gitai's documentary films (*Ananas*, 1984; and *House*, 1980). Sounds can make us reinterpret what is nominally background and, on some occasions, reconstitute it as thematic foreground.

A fourth strategy open to documentary is to make a much more consciously analytical use of the camera. Reframing with the camera resembles a form of montage which selects, connects, and juxtaposes different images, but in "real time." In fiction films it is possible for such an approach to be scripted, as in Hitchcock's experimental *Rope* (1948). In documentary the situation is very different, requiring on the film-maker's part an ability to impose a process of thought on the camera's movements while filming unpredictable material. So far few film-makers have adopted such a demanding interpretive stance while filming or have developed the skills to accomplish it.

But camera movement within a shot allows for certain kinds of irony which are not possible with shorter takes. In Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), the long take makes particular reference to the fact that however long one pans over landscapes where atrocities took place, one still sees only landscapes. In effect, one looks in vain for the signified in the signifier. In a number of Godard's films (*Weekend*, 1967; *British Sounds*) long tracking shots, instead of following characters, as is usual in fiction films, track past them, fixing them not in relation to the film but in relation to their physical and social setting.

Lastly, it is worth noting that new technologies may have a profound effect upon viewing practices and, eventually, upon film form. We have yet to absorb the full implications of television. Video, an even more recent phenomenon, combines the privacy of television viewing with much greater control over the selection of viewing material. This could make possible longer works, organised in chapters or clusters of related films. Video also makes it easier to recast old films in new forms, or produce new commentaries on them. As for interactive video, it may, by giving the viewer even greater control over the investigation of material, generate much more exploratory viewing practices and eventually stimulate the new film-making practices that would allow for them.

Neither film-making nor documentary will be revolutionized by the long take alone, nor should it be claimed that the long take is in any sense the special province of documentary. But the question of what to do with the qualities which are found in long takes, and yet not found in the films derived from them, is perhaps the quintessential problem of documentary. It brings us closer to the paradox of reduction which lies at the heart of all representation, but which has none of the same implications in fiction that it does in documentary. For within every documentary is a kind of cavity, the negative imprint of the missing persons and events which are *not* there. In struggling with this material, the documentary film-maker is struggling not only with signs but quite literally with the shadows of the living and the dead. If photography does not steal the soul it steals something very like it, something deeply enough felt to generate the fraught ethical debates which uniquely surround the making of documentary films and photographs. These debates more commonly concern what is shown than what is left out. But for the film-maker the problem is truly one of disposing of the human remains.

■ David MacDougall is a maker of documentary and ethnographic films. He was for many years director of the Film Unit of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. His most recent film concerns mountain shepherds of Sardinia.

## Notes

This is an expanded version of ideas which I first presented in a seminar as a Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre in Canberra, Australia, in 1989. I should like to thank the HRC for its support. I am indebted to E. Richard Sorenson and Allison Jablonko for the term "digressive search,"[20] which I use in a rather different sense from theirs; and to Richard Cardinal for the stimulation provided by his essay, "Pausing over Peripheral Detail." I am also grateful to Leslie Devereaux, Gary Kildea, and Paul Willemen for discussions with me of some of the issues raised here.

1. *Photo Wallahs* (1991), directed by David and Judith MacDougall, Fieldwork Films, Australia.
2. Christopher Pinney, "The Lexical Spaces of Eye-Spy," in Peter I. Crawford and David Turton (eds.), *Film as Ethnog-*

*raphy* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 27.

3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Dai Vaughan, "Notes on the Ascent of a Fictitious Mountain," in John Corner (ed.), *Documentary and the Mass Media* (London: Edward Arnold, 1986), p. 162.
5. Ibid., p. 163.
6. See Barry Salt, "Statistical Style Analysis of Motion Pictures," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Fall 1974).
7. Raul Ruiz, ignoring the taboo, jokes about this in his film about documentary, *Of Great Events and Ordinary People* (1979). As the camera pans slowly along a wall after an interview, a voice remarks: "The narrator should say something in this pause."
8. Brian Henderson, "The Long Take," *Film Comment*, vol. 7, no. 2 (Summer 1971), p. 9.
9. Israel Rosenfeld, "Seeing Through the Brain," *New York Review of Books*, vol. 31, no. 15 (October 11, 1984).
10. Roger Cardinal, "Pausing over Peripheral Detail," *Framework*, vol. 30–31 (1986), pp. 112–133.
11. Nick Browne, "The Spectator-in-the-Text: The Rhetoric of Stagecoach," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 29, no. 2 (Winter 1975–76), pp. 34–35.
12. Howard Gardner, *The Mind's New Science* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 273.
13. One can get an idea of this by recalling a game which many of us played as children. When we repeated a familiar word over and over again—a word like "hippopotamus"—sign and referent began to separate until the sign became an unrecognizable phonetic pattern. It then became subject to the mispronunciations that occur with tongue twisters. A kind of verbal searching led to a play on alternative stress patterns (hippopo*ta*mus), picking out new signs previously hidden in the word—*hip* and *pot*, for example. Part of the pleasure of such a game for children, of course, is precisely this subversion of the linguistic codes of adults.
14. See George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
15. Alan Rosenthal, *The Documentary Conscience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 179.
16. Henderson, op. cit. pp. 10–11.
17. Brian Henderson, "Towards a Non-Bourgeois Camera Style," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 2 (Winter 1970–71), p. 5.
18. John Berger, "Uses of Photography," in *About Looking* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1980).
19. E. H. Gombrich, "The Mask and the Face: the Perception of Physiognomic Likeness," in E. H. Gombrich et al. (eds.), *Art, Perception and Reality*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), p.17.
20. See E. Richard Sorenson and Allison Jablonko, "Research Filming of Naturally Occurring Phenomena: Basic Strategies," in Paul Hockings (ed.), *Principles of Visual Anthropology* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975).


**CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS**
**Program in Contemporary Arts Criticism**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trust are jointly funding the Fellowship program in contemporary arts criticism, established in the Division of Critical Studies at California Institute of the Arts in 1990. The program aims to provide Fellows with an opportunity to make a significant contribution to current debates within the arts and to play a part in shaping the emergent forms and agendas of cultural criticism in an environment where the contemporary arts are practiced and interpreted. The Fellowships are for applied criticism in the arts offered at the Institute: art, photography, design, dance, film, video, music and theatre. Applications will also be considered from candidates with multidisciplinary interests. Four fellowships will be awarded for 1993-94 at $25,000 each.

For information write to:
Dick Hebdige, Program Director
Mellon Fellowships, Division of Critical Studies
**California Institute of the Arts**
24700 McBean Parkway
Valencia, California 91355
805/253-7804, fax: 805/255-0177



STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION, 9/30/92

Title: **Film Quarterly.** Frequency: Quarterly. Four issues published annually. Subscription price: $19.00 individuals, $40.00 institutions. Location of office of publication: 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, Alameda County, CA 94720. Headquarters of publishers: Same. Publisher: University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, CA 94720. Editor: Ann Martin, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 94720. Owner: The Regents of the University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720. The purpose, function and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.

| Extent and nature of circulation: | Av. no. copies each issue preceding 12 months | Actual no. copies of single issue pub. nearest to filing date |
|---|---|---|
| A. Total no. copies printed | 7529 | 7390 |
| B. Paid circulation: | | |
| 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales | 1202 | 3337 |
| 2. Mail subscriptions | 3136 | 3122 |
| C. Total paid circulation | 4338 | 6459 |
| D. Free distribution | 107 | 108 |
| E. Total distribution | 4445 | 4567 |
| F. Copies not distributed | | |
| 1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing | 853 | 341 |
| 2. Return from news agents | 2231 | 482 |
| G. Total | 7529 | 7390 |

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
S. M. Whisler, Director, Journals Division, UC Press.

# Review

## The Player

Director: Robert Altman. Screenplay: Michael Tolkin, based on his novel. Producers: David Brown, Michael Tolkin, Nick Wechsler. Cinematographer: Jean Lepine. Editor: Geraldine Peroni. Music: Thomas Newman. Fine Line.

Robert Altman plays with the elements of film-making the way jazz musicians play with tunes and changes, the way painters like Jasper Johns and Jim Dine play with pop iconography. He destabilizes the elements he works with, opening them and making them part of larger processes, part of a flow. He works with what you're not used to admitting to consciousness, what you normally tune out: objects and actions at the edges of your vision, overheard sounds, half-formed thoughts, hazy memories.

Altman's one-time assistant Alan Rudolph recalls that Altman used to say to him, "Nobody makes the films they want to make, they make the films they're able to make." Altman's film-making suggests an ethos of taking your clue from what life presents to you. "I don't go in and say, Let's see how we can do it differently," says Altman. "It's more like, I don't want to do *that*, because I've seen that. And also, it never rings true to me. It's more starting at the inside of these projects and building them from the inside out. I'm always surprised myself by what the exterior, the total package, looks like."

His 1992 film, *The Player,* is another easygoing goof on an institution. In his 1971 *M*A*S*H* it was the Army; in his 1975 *Nashville* it was politics and the country-music industry. Here, it's Hollywood. The picture is naughty, and it has dazzle and audacity. But *The Player* doesn't have the all-devouring quality of Altman's early 1970s work, or the intensity and concentration—of bitterness, exile, rancor, and obsessiveness—of some of the work he made in the 1980s after leaving Hollywood. *The Player* may remind us of the great Altman films, but it isn't really great: it's movie-making as sunny-spirited recreation. Is there a danger Robert Altman will become a benevolent, lovable sweetie? Altman's relationship with his subject is not the antagonistic one you'd expect, given his history with Hollywood. He doesn't seem to have a serious quarrel with the film industry anymore. It's like a formerly married couple spending an evening together: maybe they wrangle and feel some of the old heat, but in the end they back off. They've learned they can live and let die.

In *The Player*, which is taken from a Michael Tolkin novel that's essentially a writer's hate letter to the movie business, the central character is the once-thought-to-be-rising studio executive Griffin Mill (Tim Robbins). He feels his career is riding on every decision. He's freaked out and paranoid; Altman and Tolkin suggest that this is the normal emotional state of Hollywood people on the make. Griffin is having trouble being a player. Something's holding him back and torpedoing his prospects. His girlfriend, Bonnie, who is a story editor at the studio where he works and who is his ally in his job wars, doesn't excite him. At the office, he's picking up bad vibes—it's rumored that another young hotshot is being brought in and will rank above him. He's also receiving threatening, homicidal postcards from an anonymous writer whom he has evidently snubbed. Griffin is a brat, but a brat in torment; the postcards bring together the lousy feelings he has about his life. So when he thinks he has figured out who the writer is, he tries to placate his suspect by offering him a deal. But this writer isn't grateful, and Griffin's rage gets the better of him. As Altman presents the movie, it's a joke on the idea of the "up" Hollywood ending: Griffin learns (you always have to learn something in a Hollywood film) to live with being a murderer, and this releases him from his torment.

Altman opens *The Player* with a bang—a virtuoso shot that begins with an image of a clapper coming down in front of a mural depicting early film-making. During this shot's eight minutes, what we see and hear includes a discussion of the virtues of fast cutting vs. continuous, unbroken shots; a chat about the famous opening shot in *Touch of Evil*; two different close-ups of a postcard; several cases of mistaken identity; a variety of activities seen through windows; a group of Japanese visitors on a studio tour; and three or four movie "pitches." This shot sets the stage for a film that could be said to be about the manipulation of images, and frames within frames.

Altman moves in tight for Griffin's drama, and then backs off and takes in the moviemaking world,

a cuckoo-land where lives, careers, and projects exist in a state of perpetual, dangling uncertainty. The movie is filled with "real" celebrities—actual performers and film-makers playing themselves. You're kept (enjoyably) uncertain about which performers are appearing as themselves and which you're being asked to accept as fictional characters. We can take this as a visualization of Griffin's paranoia, as well as of how much of life in the movie world consists of stargazing—in Hollywood, you're always on the lookout. A producer (Carolyn Pfeiffer) who attended the first screening of *The Player* says that afterward, when the lights came up, it was as though the movie had spilled out into the auditorium—the audience was full of film business types, and some of them had been up on the screen.

It's usually a gag when Altman moves in tight on Griffin again. We laugh at this spoiled boy's fears and humiliations, and at his "dignity." When Malcolm McDowell (playing himself) spots Griffin at a hotel and needles him, Griffin is shaken; for a second he looks as if he might burst into tears. When the Pasadena police grill him about the writer's death, they unnerve him with their small talk and their unsmoothed-out eccentricities. (In *The Player*, Pasadena contrasts with Hollywood; it's where a rep house plays *The Bicycle Thief*, where the "truth" is still an issue, and where Griffin's power strategies count for nothing at all.)

For Griffin, writers might almost be interchangeable nuisances. When he tries to locate the author of the threatening postcards, he's willing to settle for the first name that's plausible. In a sinister, oddly fluid and beautiful scene, he drives up to this fellow's house and calls him on his cellular car phone; he gets June (Greta Scacchi), a painter who is the writer's girlfriend. Although he's calling from right outside her house, Griffin lets her assume he's at his office. He walks from window to window, looking in on her as they talk; she moves about, playing with her paints and paintings. The camera moves from outside the house with him and his phone and his pretence to inside with her and her reflection—it's night and the house is lit up from within. June is dressed in flowing white. The interior of the house is white and blue, and it's full of paints and jars, and hung and stacked paintings. Transparent and patterned shower curtains hang from the ceiling, and photos are taped to the walls and the refrigerator door. Everything is mingling and filmy; the imagery may put you in mind of tissues and placentas and pregnancy. This is June's bell jar, but she isn't coming apart, she's happy, moist and glowing—a woman in her own world, "creating." (Later, after he's met her, Griffin asks which gallery she sells through; she explains she doesn't sell because she's never finished with her work. These images are her feelings, and she's never done feeling.) They talk and flirt. She explains that her strange last name—Gudmundsdottir—is Icelandic; there's some banter about Greenland being icy and Iceland being green. Somehow the Red Sea is mentioned.

When he goes off to find the writer, Griffin thinks that what he wants is to make amends. (What we learn in the course of the film is that what he really wants is not to be bothered by his scruples anymore.) David Kahane, the writer Griffin finds, is loud, angry, and shabby—a perpetual grad-student type who is intent on his autobiographical movie idea about a student in Japan. The plot of *The Player* turns on whether the studio is vulnerable to a Japanese takeover; Griffin and Kahane's conversation mostly takes place at a Japanese karaoke restaurant/bar, where customers get on stage and, looking into a monitor and singing into a mike, perform to canned music, with a screen above them projecting MTV-like imagery and subtitles ("Why can't we start over?"). Nearly everything in the film is doubled and tripled in this way. And the question of who owns the image is always being posed.

Kahane guesses that Griffin discovered his whereabouts from June, whom he refers to as "the ice queen." Griffin doesn't really flip until Kahane taunts him: Everyone knows Griffin can't O.K. projects any more, that the new executive is supplanting him. When Griffin is fired, what will become of him? "I can write. What can you do?" yells Kahane. That's when Griffin's rage overcomes him; he kills the writer, holding his head in a puddle that reflects red light—the writer dies in a "red sea."

Part of the reason the executives hate writers is that they depend on them; the writers actually come up with ideas. Altman sets up a writing-related satirical scheme: in this picture, the more you're attached to writing, the more conscience-stricken and miserable you're likely to be—and the more full of integrity. The unhappy story editor Bonnie is a "tragic" character; she gets more and more shut out as the movie goes along. Early on, Griffin himself stands up for writers at a meeting where the new

hotshot is passing around an issue of the *L.A. Times* so he can show his finesse at improvising movie subjects from public (i.e., free) sources. Griffin watches the paper with dread; a small front-page headline announces David Kahane's death of the night before.

Altman uses a writer/director played by Richard E. Grant for contrast with Kahane. The Grant character broadcasts how uncompromising he is. His idea for a film, he's quick to point out, requires no stars and an unhappy ending—because that's how life is. He gets tearful when he tells his downbeat story, he moves himself so. He's brilliant at using the appearance of daring, integrity, and passion: he'll do well for himself. By the end of *The Player* he has turned his vision into an upbeat Julia Roberts/Bruce Willis vehicle. "The audience wrote this ending," he exults.

Altman catches a central thing about Hollywood: Griffin, like all the other executives, is always at pains to manipulate "image" to make the most impressive possible statement about himself. The depiction of Hollywood life feels authentic—these people have enormous egos, yet they are wildly insecure: they don't really have anything that's theirs. Something is forever eluding them—the idea, the hit, the magic. So it's always crucial to give the impression you possess the magic—everything becomes a matter of positioning, strategy, and one-upsmanship.

*The Player* shares with Altman's 1973 *The Long Goodbye* a breezy sense of humor about movie-fed foolishness and a distinctive view of corruption. Altman doesn't overdo the corruption in either of these films: everything that counts can be bought and sold, yet the environment isn't ominous. Inside and outside spill into each other, as they do in L.A. Altman's camera zooms in, zooms back, changing position and focal length, moving from room to room, from inside to outside. This is a visual realization of what happens in your head when you spend time in L.A.: you stop worrying about what's real and what's not.

The two films also share a vision of L.A. as a make-believe city bedazzled by the movies. Yet *The Long Goodbye*, for all its sophistication and cynicism, has a little nostalgia for what people tend to think of as the "kind of movies Hollywood doesn't make anymore"—with the old stars and the old glamor, with the "well-told stories"—essentially,

Tim Robbins as Griffin Mill in *The Player*

escapist fantasies from the 1930s and 1940s. The Hollywood of *The Player* doesn't have that depth or beauty, or that quality of fantasy. It doesn't even seem to bother feeding its own myth. It's simply a place sharp people exploit. The characters here aren't square; they're media savvy, hip cynics—in this world, everyone's become a connoisseur of self-reflexiveness. And there's an extra layer of technology, technology within technology: car phones, faxes, phones in screening rooms. (When Griffin opens up his glove compartment and there's a fax machine at work and it prints out a replica of a postcard, the Chinese boxes seem endless.) This is an environment where media competition and attention getting have become the only activities anyone admits to believing in or standing for.

June the painter has no awareness at all of the movie business; it seems to strike her as little more than a glamorous lark. Courting her, Griffin takes her to a resort in Desert Hot Springs favored by film-business people because they're kept anonymous there. "Do places like this really exist?" she says in

delight. "Only in the movies," he replies. The spas are glowing and blue, but they have been set among boulders and rocks; they have been given "natural"-seeming shapes. Let's go into the water, June suggests. "You're not really Icelandic," guesses Griffin. "Oh, did I say that?" says June.

June's acceptance of the surface and only the surface might seem like a form of brain damage in Europe; in L.A., it's the city's special form of grace. June makes it all up as she goes along; she *plays* with images. Apart from the cops, she's the one character in the movie who isn't in the film world; she's the only character Altman doesn't really satirize. (This makes her seem rather indefinite; and Scacchi seems to get only about halfway into the groove.) Many of June's paintings have words and letters in them, stenciled (it seems), but very painterly, with drizzles and drips. Griffin asks June if she likes words, and she answers, "I like words, I like letters. Sentences I'm not crazy about." Griffin is entranced: he is sprung loose from what binds him to words.

Griffin is completed by his involvement with June—the film world doesn't make him crazy anymore. He has shaken free of his feelings of responsibility. He just doesn't care, and that makes him a winner. He can play on the surface and not be dragged down by his conscience—this is seen, satirically, as a triumph. Getting away with murder becomes the most freeing event in his life.

Altman framed *M*A*S*H* with a p-a system, which was constantly making bungled announcements for old war movies that were going to be shown in a tent somewhere. In *The Player* he frames the action with posters for old crime pictures. They're gaudy: the titles are amusingly "dramatic," and the ad copy on them is hype from another era. *M*A*S*H* ends with the p-a system announcing a final movie, which turns out to be the one we've just seen. At the end of *The Player*, Griffin is driving home after a day at the office. He receives a call on his car phone and listens to a pitch from the writer who actually wrote him the postcards that filled him with terror; it's the story of the movie we've just seen. The faceless writer could be any one of hundreds of writers who have pitched their movie ideas to Griffin. Is the writer blackmailing him? He might be, but Griffin is intrigued anyway: who cares where a marketable story comes from?

As he steers through the L.A. streets, Griffin is wearing a black suit with charcoal pinstripes. He has traded in his enclosed Range Rover for a black Rolls Royce convertible, and the vivid red leather interior glows in the sun. Griffin is happy and masterful. He drives up to his home and we're given a shot of big lush red roses; through them we see a pregnant, radiant June welcoming him. The blue and white of the ice queen; the black of the demonic; the red of sexual excitement and fullness—even June's dress has some red in it in addition to the usual blue and white. Griffin and June hug; male and female merge. This is American wedded bliss, Altman is saying good-naturedly: red, white, and blue against black.

It doesn't seem to bother Altman much. Is one reason *The Player* doesn't have a lot of bite that Altman just can't take seriously the anguish of a vain young studio executive? Tim Robbins has gravity, focus, and a delight in being found silly; he manages to suggest that Griffin would dearly love people to believe that the thoughts he's keeping to himself are dignified and impressive. And with his height (6' 5") and his huge baby's head, Robbins is quite a camera subject. But Altman's Griffin—the center of the film—is thin. The Griffin of the novel has evil in him, and the reader experiences the world as Griffin experiences it. Altman moves the malevolence out into the system generally, where it disperses and becomes a shared craziness.

Altman sees the current Hollywood as nothing but an absurd business based on fleecing people, empty even of the entertaining hucksterism of old. But Hollywood people don't seem to take the movie as a hate letter to themselves; this satire of Hollywood is embraced by its targets. They can enjoy *The Player* because there's nothing really adversarial about it. Altman is saying out loud what they all think and feel; his film jibes with their view of themselves. (It's like the last Buñuel films, which tickled the haute bourgeoisie Buñuel once threatened with murder.) *The Player* doesn't add up to much more than a very sleekly done roast—an amusing series of inside jokes choreographed around and through the familiar restaurants, offices, and parking lots. Altman isn't fighting the business people. Now they can accept him as a master.

RAY SAWHILL

■ Ray Sawhill has published in *Connoisseur, Anarchy, Interview,* and *The Modern Review.*

# Book Reviews

## Interpreting Films
### Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema

By Janet Staiger. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992. $45.00 cloth; $16.95 paper.

Janet Staiger's *Interpreting Films* is a sustained and cogent demonstration of the theoretical value and methodological principles of a historical materialist investigation of the relation of films and their viewers. If, as she maintains, film theory has traditionally been text-centered, asking questions about how cinema functions and how films operate to structure responses in their viewers, this has tended to overshadow the importance of questions about the historical context in which films and spectators come together and which conditions and limits the range of interpretations viewers may place on films. Thus, the historical investigations which she suggests film scholars may profitably undertake have as their goal clarification of the contextually based historical frames of reference which spectators bring to films and which condition the intelligibility of those films.

Staiger's theory and methods, then, belong to a form of reception studies, and she is careful to disentangle her approach from work on reception found in other disciplines, primarily literary criticism, and to a more limited extent in film and television studies. She articulates her own approach by critiquing, but in a fair-minded and generous spirit, what she perceives as the fallacies of other, insufficiently historicized accounts of reader responses. For example, she groups existing reader response theories as being either text-activated, reader-activated, or context-activated accounts depending on where they tend to locate the generation of meaning. She finds David Bordwell's work on the ways that film narration cues spectator responses to be a text-activated approach, whereas the emphasis in British cultural studies on negotiated or oppositional readings is clearly a reader-activated approach in its insistence on the reader's freedom to restructure the text.

But, Staiger cautions, readers do not have complete freedom to do whatever they wish with texts (an assumption she calls the "free-reader fallacy"). Their interpretations are conditioned by the historical frames of reference they bring to a film and by their socially constructed identities (in terms of race, class, gender, etc.). Here her Marxism is a salutary tool for its ability to check the apolitical thrust of some reader-activated response theories. In other words, if readers can reconfigure texts, then a text's socially or politically repressive content becomes, in turn, less crucial and less urgently an object of study. Staiger does insist that texts are real and that they do offer a set of data for their viewers' perceptions. But the "meaning" of the text, she argues, is not immanent, not in the text, but in the historical context that furnishes the ground on which viewers and texts meet. Thus, she offers a context-activated reception theory.

In the first of the book's two sections she defines the theoretical intricacies of her approach and differentiates it from other text- or reader-activated approaches. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the reader will be happy to find the somewhat abstract theoretical assertions of the book's first section fully validated by a series of engrossing case studies in the second. Ranging through film history from the silent period to, most recently, the work of Woody Allen, Staiger investigates the historical conditions constraining and shaping the responses of audiences to a wide variety of films in order to demonstrate the breadth of material to which her method is applicable. Drawing on primary and secondary sources of information about viewers' responses—newspaper reviews, editorials, columns, interviews, sample surveys, novels, diaries—she correlates this material with the social and political currents of the era to map the horizon of possibilities structuring the documented responses.

For example, in a discussion of the changing reception of *The Birth of a Nation* in the teens and again in the late 1930s, she points out that the racial politics of the film could play to very different political agendas in the two periods. Whereas defenders of the film in 1915 answered charges of racism by appealing to free speech or by pointing to the film's historical verisimilitude, in the 1940s, with the Cold War, debates occasioned by the film's revival entangled racial issues with anti-Nazi, anti-Stalin agendas. Defenders of Griffith engaged in Red-baiting and made the film express liberal, democratic values by paralleling the Reconstruction era with the Nazi occupation of France and Norway.

Other case studies focus on alternative readings of Judy Garland and *A Star is Born* by gay audiences; the reception of so-called "primitive" films (i.e., films that apparently ignore continuity principles in storytelling) by early cinema audiences (this is an especially good and level-headed analysis); the controversial reputation of Erich von Stroheim; and the sociological conditions surrounding the rise of auteurist reading strategies in response to art film imports during the 1950s.

Throughout these case studies, Staiger points out that her approach does not constitute a philosophy of reception but the historical investigation of "the interactions of

real readers and texts, actual spectators and films." With respect to the way this announced objective is handled, I do have a substantive reservation. With her emphasis upon tracking the responses of real viewers, Staiger relies upon the sources of empirical data described earlier, yet unfortunately—and consistent with much of contemporary film studies—she evidences an antipathy toward social science research, writing that "it is always wise to be somewhat suspicious of social science data about audiences." Thus, sample surveys or experimental data on audience responses to movies are not generally accepted into evidence in her accounts (though she does, on occasion, cite the work of George Gallup or Paul Lazarsfeld). There are certainly compelling historical reasons for omitting this information since it is not often available for older audiences. But when it is available, why omit part of the pie, especially when the objective is the salutary one of profiling the responses of real viewers? And, as Staiger admits, some of the data she does rely on—newspaper and magazine reviews, editorial columns—tend to skew the audiences whose responses are examined to those individuals who have access to the media for airing their views. Ethnographic and survey methods can be useful ways of getting to the responses of more recessive groups of viewers, and experimental data permit a systematic approach to issues of causation.

This reservation notwithstanding, Staiger's account is a persuasive demonstration of the value of historical work on movie audiences that is sensitive to context as the locus of meaning. Furthermore, in ways that will be healthy for the field, the book clearly shows why it is important to pay attention to real spectators rather than those who exist only in theory.

STEPHEN PRINCE

■ Stephen Prince is the Book Review Editor of *Film Quarterly*.

## The Stars Appear

**By Richard Dyer MacCann. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992. $42.50 cloth; $22.50 paper.**

The third volume of Richard Dyer MacCann's prospective six-volume series on silent cinema is a lively collection of writings by and about silent film stars. It brings together critical writings, encyclopedia entries, program notes, and extracts from fan magazines and memoirs to provide an overview of the lives and work of silent actors. Highlights of the collection include Blake Lucas's "Acting Style in Silent Films," James Naremore's "The Acting Style of Lillian Gish," and Alexander Walker's writings on Barthelmess, Swanson, and Bow.

The strength of the collection does not reside so much in the individual selections, however. Few are more than four or five pages long and only a handful aim at rigorous historical or critical analysis. The volume's strength lies quite simply in the range and number of the writings that it brings together. Much of this material is difficult to come by, and much more would likely escape the notice of all but the most dedicated fans and specialists. Readers will appreciate Professor MacCann's efforts.

They will also, perhaps, be frustrated by the book's limitations. Though the general introduction and the introductions to the various chapters ("Performing for the Silent Screen," "Early Luminaries," "Mary and Doug," "Gloria and Rudy," "Some Sad and Happy Endings," and "Sidelights on the System") provide the volume a degree of thematic coherence, they do not address any of the vital debates in contemporary cultural history. The difficult question of the status of Hollywood memoirs and fan magazine articles as historical evidence is raised but immediately dismissed. And recent work by Miriam Hansen and Gaylyn Studlar on Valentino and by Roberta Pearson on silent film acting is excluded, presumably because of the degree to which it relies on contemporary theory. *The Stars Appear* is determinedly anachronistic in its approach to its subject.

This, however, does not detract from the book's interest or negate its usefulness to students and scholars who are willing to look elsewhere for compelling historical and theoretical perspectives. The book does what it sets out to do well, providing in one place an imaginative selection of journalistic, promotional, and autobiographical writings about the early stars. Appendices provide biographical sketches of actors and film and video rental information.

RICHARD DECORDOVA

■ Richard deCordova teaches at DePaul University in Chicago.

## Frank Capra
### The Catastrophe of Success

**By Joseph McBride. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992. $27.50.**

After the triumphant reception of *The Glass Menagerie* and the subsequent pressure he experienced as he sought to match its achievement, Tennessee Williams lamented what he called "the catastrophe of Success."

real readers and texts, actual spectators and films." With respect to the way this announced objective is handled, I do have a substantive reservation. With her emphasis upon tracking the responses of real viewers, Staiger relies upon the sources of empirical data described earlier, yet unfortunately—and consistent with much of contemporary film studies—she evidences an antipathy toward social science research, writing that "it is always wise to be somewhat suspicious of social science data about audiences." Thus, sample surveys or experimental data on audience responses to movies are not generally accepted into evidence in her accounts (though she does, on occasion, cite the work of George Gallup or Paul Lazarsfeld). There are certainly compelling historical reasons for omitting this information since it is not often available for older audiences. But when it is available, why omit part of the pie, especially when the objective is the salutary one of profiling the responses of real viewers? And, as Staiger admits, some of the data she does rely on—newspaper and magazine reviews, editorial columns—tend to skew the audiences whose responses are examined to those individuals who have access to the media for airing their views. Ethnographic and survey methods can be useful ways of getting to the responses of more recessive groups of viewers, and experimental data permit a systematic approach to issues of causation.

This reservation notwithstanding, Staiger's account is a persuasive demonstration of the value of historical work on movie audiences that is sensitive to context as the locus of meaning. Furthermore, in ways that will be healthy for the field, the book clearly shows why it is important to pay attention to real spectators rather than those who exist only in theory.

STEPHEN PRINCE

■ Stephen Prince is the Book Review Editor of *Film Quarterly*.

## The Stars Appear

**By Richard Dyer MacCann. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992. $42.50 cloth; $22.50 paper.**

The third volume of Richard Dyer MacCann's prospective six-volume series on silent cinema is a lively collection of writings by and about silent film stars. It brings together critical writings, encyclopedia entries, program notes, and extracts from fan magazines and memoirs to provide an overview of the lives and work of silent actors. Highlights of the collection include Blake Lucas's "Acting Style in Silent Films," James Naremore's "The Acting Style of Lillian Gish," and Alexander Walker's writings on Barthelmess, Swanson, and Bow.

The strength of the collection does not reside so much in the individual selections, however. Few are more than four or five pages long and only a handful aim at rigorous historical or critical analysis. The volume's strength lies quite simply in the range and number of the writings that it brings together. Much of this material is difficult to come by, and much more would likely escape the notice of all but the most dedicated fans and specialists. Readers will appreciate Professor MacCann's efforts.

They will also, perhaps, be frustrated by the book's limitations. Though the general introduction and the introductions to the various chapters ("Performing for the Silent Screen," "Early Luminaries," "Mary and Doug," "Gloria and Rudy," "Some Sad and Happy Endings," and "Sidelights on the System") provide the volume a degree of thematic coherence, they do not address any of the vital debates in contemporary cultural history. The difficult question of the status of Hollywood memoirs and fan magazine articles as historical evidence is raised but immediately dismissed. And recent work by Miriam Hansen and Gaylyn Studlar on Valentino and by Roberta Pearson on silent film acting is excluded, presumably because of the degree to which it relies on contemporary theory. *The Stars Appear* is determinedly anachronistic in its approach to its subject.

This, however, does not detract from the book's interest or negate its usefulness to students and scholars who are willing to look elsewhere for compelling historical and theoretical perspectives. The book does what it sets out to do well, providing in one place an imaginative selection of journalistic, promotional, and autobiographical writings about the early stars. Appendices provide biographical sketches of actors and film and video rental information.

RICHARD DECORDOVA

■ Richard deCordova teaches at DePaul University in Chicago.

## Frank Capra
### The Catastrophe of Success

**By Joseph McBride. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992. $27.50.**

After the triumphant reception of *The Glass Menagerie* and the subsequent pressure he experienced as he sought to match its achievement, Tennessee Williams lamented what he called "the catastrophe of Success."

real readers and texts, actual spectators and films." With respect to the way this announced objective is handled, I do have a substantive reservation. With her emphasis upon tracking the responses of real viewers, Staiger relies upon the sources of empirical data described earlier, yet unfortunately—and consistent with much of contemporary film studies—she evidences an antipathy toward social science research, writing that "it is always wise to be somewhat suspicious of social science data about audiences." Thus, sample surveys or experimental data on audience responses to movies are not generally accepted into evidence in her accounts (though she does, on occasion, cite the work of George Gallup or Paul Lazarsfeld). There are certainly compelling historical reasons for omitting this information since it is not often available for older audiences. But when it is available, why omit part of the pie, especially when the objective is the salutary one of profiling the responses of real viewers? And, as Staiger admits, some of the data she does rely on—newspaper and magazine reviews, editorial columns—tend to skew the audiences whose responses are examined to those individuals who have access to the media for airing their views. Ethnographic and survey methods can be useful ways of getting to the responses of more recessive groups of viewers, and experimental data permit a systematic approach to issues of causation.

This reservation notwithstanding, Staiger's account is a persuasive demonstration of the value of historical work on movie audiences that is sensitive to context as the locus of meaning. Furthermore, in ways that will be healthy for the field, the book clearly shows why it is important to pay attention to real spectators rather than those who exist only in theory.

STEPHEN PRINCE

■ Stephen Prince is the Book Review Editor of *Film Quarterly*.

## The Stars Appear

**By Richard Dyer MacCann. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1992. $42.50 cloth; $22.50 paper.**

The third volume of Richard Dyer MacCann's prospective six-volume series on silent cinema is a lively collection of writings by and about silent film stars. It brings together critical writings, encyclopedia entries, program notes, and extracts from fan magazines and memoirs to provide an overview of the lives and work of silent actors. Highlights of the collection include Blake Lucas's "Acting Style in Silent Films," James Naremore's "The Acting Style of Lillian Gish," and Alexander Walker's writings on Barthelmess, Swanson, and Bow.

The strength of the collection does not reside so much in the individual selections, however. Few are more than four or five pages long and only a handful aim at rigorous historical or critical analysis. The volume's strength lies quite simply in the range and number of the writings that it brings together. Much of this material is difficult to come by, and much more would likely escape the notice of all but the most dedicated fans and specialists. Readers will appreciate Professor MacCann's efforts.

They will also, perhaps, be frustrated by the book's limitations. Though the general introduction and the introductions to the various chapters ("Performing for the Silent Screen," "Early Luminaries," "Mary and Doug," "Gloria and Rudy," "Some Sad and Happy Endings," and "Sidelights on the System") provide the volume a degree of thematic coherence, they do not address any of the vital debates in contemporary cultural history. The difficult question of the status of Hollywood memoirs and fan magazine articles as historical evidence is raised but immediately dismissed. And recent work by Miriam Hansen and Gaylyn Studlar on Valentino and by Roberta Pearson on silent film acting is excluded, presumably because of the degree to which it relies on contemporary theory. *The Stars Appear* is determinedly anachronistic in its approach to its subject.

This, however, does not detract from the book's interest or negate its usefulness to students and scholars who are willing to look elsewhere for compelling historical and theoretical perspectives. The book does what it sets out to do well, providing in one place an imaginative selection of journalistic, promotional, and autobiographical writings about the early stars. Appendices provide biographical sketches of actors and film and video rental information.

RICHARD DECORDOVA

■ Richard deCordova teaches at DePaul University in Chicago.

## Frank Capra
### The Catastrophe of Success

**By Joseph McBride. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1992. $27.50.**

After the triumphant reception of *The Glass Menagerie* and the subsequent pressure he experienced as he sought to match its achievement, Tennessee Williams lamented what he called "the catastrophe of Success."

Joseph McBride's biography of Frank Capra takes Williams' phrase as its subtitle, and it conveys well the book's dark tone. In an impressively ambitious attempt to delve into Capra's life and demystify the myths surrounding it, McBride paints a provocative, sometimes surprising portrait of the director of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *It's a Wonderful Life*. Although not without flaws, the biography makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of this important American film-maker.

McBride opens with a tone-setting vignette about Capra's 1977 return to his Sicilian birthplace, 74 years after he emigrated to America. Flu-stricken, he leaves the sumptuous dinner table set by his relatives early, rudely cuts short the visit, and later recounted, "I felt nothing." Instead of a warm reunion with family and community—like George Bailey with his Bedford Falls neighbors—we see a man completely unmoved by a return to his roots.

From there the book returns to the beginning and provides a chronological account of Capra's life. It vividly portrays Capra's father, an artistic and somewhat indolent dreamer, as well as his hardworking and demanding mother, who sees some of the father's qualities in the son Frank, denying him emotional support and praise even after he becomes a success. It then gives a much more comprehensive account than any previous work of Capra's early interest in movies and the circuitous path he followed to enter the movie business.

Once he becomes a director of Harry Langdon comedies in the middle 1920s, McBride's Capra becomes an ambitious and absorbed film-maker, devoted to making popular films and willing to exaggerate his own achievements and minimize the contributions of collaborators, particularly screenwriters. The Capra star rises through the middle 1930s, then begins to fade toward the end of the decade, when growing fame and success led the director to more expensive and ambitious—and less profitable—projects, resulting in strains with Columbia head Harry Cohn and eventual departure from the studio. By the eve of World War II, beset with doubts about his abilities, Capra fears he is an imposter. After providing an account of Capra's involvement with the "Why We Fight" series in World War II, McBride traces in considerable detail Capra's growing trepidations and creative angst during the HUAC trials and the McCarthy era. By detailing the political difficulties Capra experienced in this era, McBride also shows that Capra's decline in Hollywood during the late 1940s and early 1950s resulted as much from the shifting political climate as from Capra's sale of Liberty Films to Paramount. Even the renaissance of Capra's reputation following the publication of *Name Above the Title* in 1971 is portrayed as bittersweet, with Capra's new-found success achieved through a self-aggrandizing and distorted mythic story which McBride characterizes as a "fairy-tale account" of the director's life (648).

*Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success* has a number of strengths. First, it is based on exhaustive research and interviews with many people who knew and worked with Capra throughout his life, from family members and schoolmates to professional colleagues, associates, and confidantes. One result of this exhaustive research is a series of thumbnail sketches of many people Capra worked with over the years. Second, the biography fills in much detail about Capra's life, particularly during two key periods—his early years and the period of his rapid decline between the end of World War II and his departure from Hollywood in the early 1950s—that haven't been treated in detail before. The treatment of the early period shows that Capra had considerable interest and even some work experience in films before directing *Fultah Fisher's Boarding House* in 1922. The discussion of the decade after World War II shows that even the patriotic Republican Capra had surprising difficulties establishing his credentials as a loyal citizen during what Dalton Trumbo has called the "time of the toad." Finally—and related to the other two—the biography serves as a valuable corrective to Capra's *Name Above the Title*, demonstrating that however interesting and useful Capra's observations about his films might be, the autobiography contains many distortions, factual errors, and crucial omissions.

The biography also has some weaknesses. For academic readers, the mode of citation is frustrating: instead of footnotes, each chapter has an annotated note on sources, making it difficult at times to locate the origin of a claim. At times important assertions—for example, that Capra favored Franco's Fascist revolt during the Spanish Civil War (334)—have no clear source. Second, the treatment of Capra's decline and fall after World War II is hampered by McBride's inability to obtain FBI files on Capra, something that might now be available after Capra's death. In attempting to establish his loyalty in 1951, Capra claimed in a letter to Army Intelligence that the Los Angeles FBI relied on him as a source of information about the political beliefs of people he knew. The FBI files would have helped McBride assess Capra's claim and the extent of his interactions with the FBI.

Finally, McBride's approach to Capra is somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, he faults the director for self-aggrandizing behavior and for minimizing the important contributions of collaborators to his films, claiming that much of what we call Capra's "vision" is the creation of screenwriters like Robert Riskin and Myles Connolly. On the other hand, McBride often analyzes the films as very personal, albeit sometimes submerged, expressions of Capra's personality, an analytical strategy that accepts Capra's "one man, one film" auteurism at face value, even as much of the rest of the biography seeks to undermine it. This tension stems from the difficult

question facing any biographer of a Hollywood director: how can one sort out the contributions of a director and his collaborators long after a film has been made? I don't think McBride ever manages to answer that admittedly tough question.

In the final analysis, *Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success* is a solid biography, serving as a corrective to those who wish to view Capra as a humane Horatio Alger of Hollywood. By painting Capra as a self-aggrandizing individualist, however, McBride does not fully appreciate the fundamental tension between the drive to success and the yearning for community, between ambition and altruism, that lies at the center of Capra's life, of his greatest films, and—one could argue—of American culture itself. Capra was the Walt Whitman of movies, at times celebrating America and its people, at others despairing at the chasm between the promise and the realities of its democratic vistas. Insofar as Joseph McBride has given us a more detailed and wide-ranging picture of Capra's life and work, he has made an important contribution to the history of movies and American culture. It will remain for others to debate whether Capra's life story is best described as a catastrophe of success, a Hollywood saga of achievement, or an exemplary tale of the key tensions, conflicts, and contradictions of American life in our century.

CHARLES MALAND

■ Charles Maland teaches at the University of Tennessee.

---

## Jean Renoir
### A Life in Pictures

**By Célia Bertin. Translated by Mireille Muellner and Leonard Muellner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991. $29.50.**

Although Jean Renoir is not currently fashionable in the world of film and television studies, his life and work continue to inspire a stream of books and journal articles. With the possible exceptions of Chaplin and Eisenstein, no film director fills more shelf space in libraries. Yet if Chaplin and Eisenstein have been the subject of numerous biographies, this is the first one on Renoir to appear in English. Until the translation and publication of Bertin's investigation, Renoir's autobiography and biography of his father Auguste Renoir have had to suffice for most of us. Because cinéastes have loved his films so much, they have generally written text-centered studies. A careful scholar such as Alexander Sesonske (*Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939*, 1980) provided some relevant biographical and historical information in his one chapter/one film approach, but his primary source research beyond the films was limited. Christopher Faulkner's *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* published the same year (1986) as Bertin's biography appeared in French, explored the political and social context of the films but again did comparatively little original research on the film-maker himself. Claude Gauteur's study of Renoir and his films (*Jean Renoir, la double méprise* [1980]) unfortunately remains untranslated. Bertin's biography thus fills an important gap for those who read English more easily than French.

Bertin provides us with a wealth of new or little-known information. One's perceptions of *La Règle du jeu* are forever altered after learning that Nora Grégor, who played Christine, proved a casting mistake that forced Renoir to revise the script and to emphasize other characters. In fact, these exigencies of production are echoed by the film's subsequent history: the film was originally released at 113 minutes, but then cut down to 85—only to have 15 minutes soon returned. A "fully restored version" in the 1960s was five minutes longer than the original release version. If the mark of a great play is that it is director proof and actor proof, here is that rare film that is both editor and producer proof! Bertin's book, however, seems to gather steam as it progresses. The first chapters often feel like a paraphrasing of Jean Renoir's *Renoir, My Father* and *My Life and My Films,* while the final chapters, focusing on the aging Renoir's struggle to continue producing films and to remain productive in the face of failing health, are emotionally powerful.

Bertin's book can be read quickly and pleasurably—then consulted as the occasion arises. Yet I found it frustrating in several regards. While the book contains footnotes, they are sparse, and the sources for much information remain obscure. Bertin, moreover, adopts the tone of Renoir's autobiography and her own reading of his personality—"affable and unpretentious" and "little-given to self-analysis" (73, 92). She thus stays on the surface of events, treating them with a charming sympathy. In fact, a sharper and more critical edge is needed. Bertin accepts and even adds to the smoke screen that an aging Renoir put over his political activities in prewar France and wartime America. She offers many fascinating details, but they need to be probed and understood. Renoir, we learn, was asked to be the "lay godfather" to the son of Maurice Thorez, head of the French Communist Party, in the 1930s. This telling aside cannot be dismissed as a chance offering to a man who was "adamantly apolitical" and "hostile to ideologies and politics" (133). Such a simple fact, if known, might have been enough to have Renoir blacklisted or denied U.S. citizen-

question facing any biographer of a Hollywood director: how can one sort out the contributions of a director and his collaborators long after a film has been made? I don't think McBride ever manages to answer that admittedly tough question.

In the final analysis, *Frank Capra: The Catastrophe of Success* is a solid biography, serving as a corrective to those who wish to view Capra as a humane Horatio Alger of Hollywood. By painting Capra as a self-aggrandizing individualist, however, McBride does not fully appreciate the fundamental tension between the drive to success and the yearning for community, between ambition and altruism, that lies at the center of Capra's life, of his greatest films, and—one could argue—of American culture itself. Capra was the Walt Whitman of movies, at times celebrating America and its people, at others despairing at the chasm between the promise and the realities of its democratic vistas. Insofar as Joseph McBride has given us a more detailed and wide-ranging picture of Capra's life and work, he has made an important contribution to the history of movies and American culture. It will remain for others to debate whether Capra's life story is best described as a catastrophe of success, a Hollywood saga of achievement, or an exemplary tale of the key tensions, conflicts, and contradictions of American life in our century.

CHARLES MALAND

■ Charles Maland teaches at the University of Tennessee.

---

## Jean Renoir
### A Life in Pictures

**By Célia Bertin. Translated by Mireille Muellner and Leonard Muellner. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991. $29.50.**

Although Jean Renoir is not currently fashionable in the world of film and television studies, his life and work continue to inspire a stream of books and journal articles. With the possible exceptions of Chaplin and Eisenstein, no film director fills more shelf space in libraries. Yet if Chaplin and Eisenstein have been the subject of numerous biographies, this is the first one on Renoir to appear in English. Until the translation and publication of Bertin's investigation, Renoir's autobiography and biography of his father Auguste Renoir have had to suffice for most of us. Because cinéastes have loved his films so much, they have generally written text-centered studies. A careful scholar such as Alexander Sesonske (*Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939*, 1980) provided some relevant biographical and historical information in his one chapter/one film approach, but his primary source research beyond the films was limited. Christopher Faulkner's *The Social Cinema of Jean Renoir* published the same year (1986) as Bertin's biography appeared in French, explored the political and social context of the films but again did comparatively little original research on the film-maker himself. Claude Gauteur's study of Renoir and his films (*Jean Renoir, la double méprise* [1980]) unfortunately remains untranslated. Bertin's biography thus fills an important gap for those who read English more easily than French.

Bertin provides us with a wealth of new or little-known information. One's perceptions of *La Règle du jeu* are forever altered after learning that Nora Grégor, who played Christine, proved a casting mistake that forced Renoir to revise the script and to emphasize other characters. In fact, these exigencies of production are echoed by the film's subsequent history: the film was originally released at 113 minutes, but then cut down to 85—only to have 15 minutes soon returned. A "fully restored version" in the 1960s was five minutes longer than the original release version. If the mark of a great play is that it is director proof and actor proof, here is that rare film that is both editor and producer proof! Bertin's book, however, seems to gather steam as it progresses. The first chapters often feel like a paraphrasing of Jean Renoir's *Renoir, My Father* and *My Life and My Films,* while the final chapters, focusing on the aging Renoir's struggle to continue producing films and to remain productive in the face of failing health, are emotionally powerful.

Bertin's book can be read quickly and pleasurably—then consulted as the occasion arises. Yet I found it frustrating in several regards. While the book contains footnotes, they are sparse, and the sources for much information remain obscure. Bertin, moreover, adopts the tone of Renoir's autobiography and her own reading of his personality—"affable and unpretentious" and "little-given to self-analysis" (73, 92). She thus stays on the surface of events, treating them with a charming sympathy. In fact, a sharper and more critical edge is needed. Bertin accepts and even adds to the smoke screen that an aging Renoir put over his political activities in prewar France and wartime America. She offers many fascinating details, but they need to be probed and understood. Renoir, we learn, was asked to be the "lay godfather" to the son of Maurice Thorez, head of the French Communist Party, in the 1930s. This telling aside cannot be dismissed as a chance offering to a man who was "adamantly apolitical" and "hostile to ideologies and politics" (133). Such a simple fact, if known, might have been enough to have Renoir blacklisted or denied U.S. citizen-

ship in the 1950s. Like Bertolt Brecht, or Jay Leyda for that matter, Renoir had learned the real dangers and costs of political activism. Entering his fifties and eager to stay in the United States, Renoir was savvy enough to downplay past commitments. The historian or biographer, however, need not echo such attitudes. Although Renoir may have publicly stated that "There's nothing more boring than an American Communist," privately he savored working with Frank Davis, who helped write the script for *The Woman on the Beach* (1946). "Two souls with the same taste and ideas are worth more than their weight when it's a question of defending what you want," he wrote about his "perfect collaborator" (228). Yet Davis was an American Communist who escaped the blacklist only because renowned anti-Communist Jack Warner had the unexpected audacity to give him a job. Renoir biographers should not always take the statements of their beloved subject at face value.

Bertin is to be congratulated for constantly illuminating the remarkable productivity and breadth of her subject. In specifying Renoir's acting appearances in films by other directors (both French and German) during the 1920s and 1930s, in citing his many unrealized projects, and in touching on his theatrical and television projects, she evokes the career of another master—and another favorite of André Bazin—Orson Welles. Yet in contrast to Renoir's many admirers whose interpretive works preceded hers, Bertin consciously chooses not to analyze Renoir's films. Since she often resists the implications of her biographical information, this may be just as well. Nevertheless, *Jean Renoir: A Life in Pictures* enables us look at Renoir's films with new insight and appreciation, and so guarantees that those with an ongoing interest in the film-maker will need still more book-shelf space in the near future.

CHARLES MUSSER

■ Charles Musser teaches in the Film Studies Program at Yale University.

---

## Shared Pleasures
### A History of Movie Presentation in the United States

**By Douglas Gomery. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. $40.00 cloth; $15.95 paper.**

Douglas Gomery's *Shared Pleasures* has the prime virtue of lucidity. From its diction and syntax through its overall organization and bibliographical apparatus, this ambitious "history of movie presentation in the United States" is clear, accessible, and straightforward. Such virtues make it eminently useful as a text for film history courses at all levels of instruction. This is not to say that *Shared Pleasures* is yet one more textbook to be skimmed over and reluctantly tolerated. In a social scientific manner rare in film studies, *Shared Pleasures* synthesizes a wide range of scholarship, as well as incorporating much original material (usually culled from trade publications). Gomery's survey of exhibition practices will definitely generate further interest in this crucial aspect of film history, not because he mounts a grand revisionist assault on received opinion or pushes for some ever-new historicism, but because the information he provides is so interesting and so obviously essential to the understanding of the social and cultural role of the movies. And information of this kind, *Shared Pleasures* suggests, is accessible, obtainable. Gomery's sort of history is doable—which, of course, does not make it any less valuable or academically respectable.

Or any less effective. Gomery contributes to the "study of the economic, social, and technological history of film watching in the United States" (xvii) in two complementary ways. He provides a larger framework within which to situate obviously significant phenomena like the development of theater chains, the operation of specialized cinemas, and the relation between motion pictures and television. At the same time, *Shared Pleasures* pauses to explore fascinating byways and detours in American film exhibition: World War II-era travelling exhibitors, "theatre television" during the late 1940s and early 1950s, newsreel theaters, multi-media extravaganzas offered in 1920s picture palaces, snack-bar innovations, and so on.

Popcorn, major Hollywood studios, 3-D technology, and HBO all have their place in Gomery's big picture. *Shared Pleasures* charts three relatively independent paths through the "changing material conditions of the exhibition of the movies" (xix). Part I takes up "Business History" from the peep show through the multiplex and is particularly strong on the workings of theater chains. Drawing quite a bit on Gomery's earlier scholarship, this section convincingly demonstrates how major film exhibitors participated in the "ongoing chain store revolution" in the American marketplace (35). As in his 1986 *Hollywood Studio System*, Gomery manages, in Part I of *Shared Pleasures*, to concisely explain (and demystify) the business of Hollywood, in this case, the highly profitable "run-zone-clearance" system of film distribution.

Overall, this business history is not offered as a tragic exercise in power and greed or a heroic romance of capitalism triumphant. Imagination and imitation, expansion and retrenchment, rise and fall mark this narrative,

ship in the 1950s. Like Bertolt Brecht, or Jay Leyda for that matter, Renoir had learned the real dangers and costs of political activism. Entering his fifties and eager to stay in the United States, Renoir was savvy enough to downplay past commitments. The historian or biographer, however, need not echo such attitudes. Although Renoir may have publicly stated that "There's nothing more boring than an American Communist," privately he savored working with Frank Davis, who helped write the script for *The Woman on the Beach* (1946). "Two souls with the same taste and ideas are worth more than their weight when it's a question of defending what you want," he wrote about his "perfect collaborator" (228). Yet Davis was an American Communist who escaped the blacklist only because renowned anti-Communist Jack Warner had the unexpected audacity to give him a job. Renoir biographers should not always take the statements of their beloved subject at face value.

Bertin is to be congratulated for constantly illuminating the remarkable productivity and breadth of her subject. In specifying Renoir's acting appearances in films by other directors (both French and German) during the 1920s and 1930s, in citing his many unrealized projects, and in touching on his theatrical and television projects, she evokes the career of another master—and another favorite of André Bazin—Orson Welles. Yet in contrast to Renoir's many admirers whose interpretive works preceded hers, Bertin consciously chooses not to analyze Renoir's films. Since she often resists the implications of her biographical information, this may be just as well. Nevertheless, *Jean Renoir: A Life in Pictures* enables us look at Renoir's films with new insight and appreciation, and so guarantees that those with an ongoing interest in the film-maker will need still more book-shelf space in the near future.

CHARLES MUSSER

■ Charles Musser teaches in the Film Studies Program at Yale University.

---

## Shared Pleasures
### A History of Movie Presentation in the United States

**By Douglas Gomery. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992. $40.00 cloth; $15.95 paper.**

Douglas Gomery's *Shared Pleasures* has the prime virtue of lucidity. From its diction and syntax through its overall organization and bibliographical apparatus, this ambitious "history of movie presentation in the United States" is clear, accessible, and straightforward. Such virtues make it eminently useful as a text for film history courses at all levels of instruction. This is not to say that *Shared Pleasures* is yet one more textbook to be skimmed over and reluctantly tolerated. In a social scientific manner rare in film studies, *Shared Pleasures* synthesizes a wide range of scholarship, as well as incorporating much original material (usually culled from trade publications). Gomery's survey of exhibition practices will definitely generate further interest in this crucial aspect of film history, not because he mounts a grand revisionist assault on received opinion or pushes for some ever-new historicism, but because the information he provides is so interesting and so obviously essential to the understanding of the social and cultural role of the movies. And information of this kind, *Shared Pleasures* suggests, is accessible, obtainable. Gomery's sort of history is doable—which, of course, does not make it any less valuable or academically respectable.

Or any less effective. Gomery contributes to the "study of the economic, social, and technological history of film watching in the United States" (xvii) in two complementary ways. He provides a larger framework within which to situate obviously significant phenomena like the development of theater chains, the operation of specialized cinemas, and the relation between motion pictures and television. At the same time, *Shared Pleasures* pauses to explore fascinating byways and detours in American film exhibition: World War II-era travelling exhibitors, "theatre television" during the late 1940s and early 1950s, newsreel theaters, multi-media extravaganzas offered in 1920s picture palaces, snack-bar innovations, and so on.

Popcorn, major Hollywood studios, 3-D technology, and HBO all have their place in Gomery's big picture. *Shared Pleasures* charts three relatively independent paths through the "changing material conditions of the exhibition of the movies" (xix). Part I takes up "Business History" from the peep show through the multiplex and is particularly strong on the workings of theater chains. Drawing quite a bit on Gomery's earlier scholarship, this section convincingly demonstrates how major film exhibitors participated in the "ongoing chain store revolution" in the American marketplace (35). As in his 1986 *Hollywood Studio System*, Gomery manages, in Part I of *Shared Pleasures*, to concisely explain (and demystify) the business of Hollywood, in this case, the highly profitable "run-zone-clearance" system of film distribution.

Overall, this business history is not offered as a tragic exercise in power and greed or a heroic romance of capitalism triumphant. Imagination and imitation, expansion and retrenchment, rise and fall mark this narrative,

especially since Gomery pays particular heed to movers and shakers like Sam Katz (of Balaban & Katz, then of the Publix theater chain) and Garth Drabinsky (co-founder of Cineplex Odeon). This part of *Shared Pleasures* also points toward several knotty questions that lie at or beyond the periphery of Gomery's vision: the way theaters (especially in small towns and rural areas) could offer a "localized" experience of the movies; the extent to which theater design and management policies affected the reception of movies; and the degree of influence wielded by exhibitors on the production as well as the distribution of film in the United States.

Part II of *Shared Pleasures* re-views the history of movie presentation from a decidedly new and extremely important vantage point: specialized or "niche" theaters that by definition challenge the notion of a monolithic mass audience. X-rated houses and rural drive-ins are not covered here, but Gomery provides a good introduction to the range of ethnic and foreign language theaters that have prospered in the United States. He pays even more attention to the development and demise of art houses, suggesting, for example, that such theaters in New York City and elsewhere helped bring about changes in censorship policy. This section of *Shared Pleasures*, coupled with David Bordwell's analysis of "art-cinema narration" in *Narration in the Fiction Film*, goes a long way toward making sense of the art film and its reception and influence in the United States.

Under the rubric of "alternative operations" also belongs, for Gomery, those theaters operated for (and sometimes by) African Americans. Jim Crow practices, desegregation efforts, and the possibility of a truly "alternative" moviegoing experience for African Americans are too often overlooked in textbook accounts of film exhibition. To Gomery's credit, he brings these topics to the fore, though here, as throughout *Shared Pleasures*, there is very little that might be called ideological or cultural analysis of movie exhibition. He is satisfied with articulating a "historical overview" (xviii)—a legitimate goal and, it seems to me, an essential foundation for speculations focused more specifically on the ideological import of the movies and the experience of moviegoing.

Similarly, when Gomery moves to the third part of *Shared Pleasures*, which focuses on "technological transformations," he examines the process of "invention, innovation, and diffusion" (xxi) without taking up the ideological/psychoanalytic significance of the basic cinematic apparatus and the aesthetic ramifications of technological changes. As would be expected, given Gomery's previous research, *Shared Pleasures* includes particularly cogent discussions of sound, wide-screen processes, color, and the presentation of movies on television. One of his stated goals is to "blur the usual distinction made between film studies and television studies" (xxi)—not in terms of interpretive strategies but in terms of business history. And here, too, Gomery succeeds, offering a convincing case that "the major Hollywood companies were the big winners in the world of the new television technologies" (295). What this victory might mean socially, culturally, and aesthetically for moviegoers and moviemakers is another question. To Gomery's credit, *Shared Pleasures* puts us in a position to be able to ask that and a host of other important questions about movie presentation in the United States.

GREGORY A. WALLER

■ Gregory A. Waller teaches at the University of Kentucky.

## Stardom
### Industry of Desire

Edited by Christine Gledhill. New York: Routledge, 1991. $16.95.

## Making Visible the Invisible
### An Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting

Edited by Carole Zucker. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1990. $39.00.

Traditionally a staple of fanzines and television talk shows, the discussion of movie acting and Hollywood stardom has begun to move into the realm of academic discourse. The subject has been given a new depth in Richard Dyer's groundbreaking studies and in James Naremore's recent *Acting in the Cinema*. The two collections under review here amply demonstrate that the topic of film performance and its cultural meanings lends itself to serious intellectual inquiry, but they also suggest some of the limitations currently holding back this provocative area of scholarship.

*Stardom* is weighted toward poststructuralist theory on the one hand and empirical sociological studies on the other, while many of the essays in *Making Visible the Invisible* rely on traditional New-Critical readings of performance, often using frame enlargements to good advantage as evidence. Both books include essays that explicate major theoretical issues which they apply to acting and stardom in illuminating ways. Especially note-

especially since Gomery pays particular heed to movers and shakers like Sam Katz (of Balaban & Katz, then of the Publix theater chain) and Garth Drabinsky (co-founder of Cineplex Odeon). This part of *Shared Pleasures* also points toward several knotty questions that lie at or beyond the periphery of Gomery's vision: the way theaters (especially in small towns and rural areas) could offer a "localized" experience of the movies; the extent to which theater design and management policies affected the reception of movies; and the degree of influence wielded by exhibitors on the production as well as the distribution of film in the United States.

Part II of *Shared Pleasures* re-views the history of movie presentation from a decidedly new and extremely important vantage point: specialized or "niche" theaters that by definition challenge the notion of a monolithic mass audience. X-rated houses and rural drive-ins are not covered here, but Gomery provides a good introduction to the range of ethnic and foreign language theaters that have prospered in the United States. He pays even more attention to the development and demise of art houses, suggesting, for example, that such theaters in New York City and elsewhere helped bring about changes in censorship policy. This section of *Shared Pleasures*, coupled with David Bordwell's analysis of "art-cinema narration" in *Narration in the Fiction Film*, goes a long way toward making sense of the art film and its reception and influence in the United States.

Under the rubric of "alternative operations" also belongs, for Gomery, those theaters operated for (and sometimes by) African Americans. Jim Crow practices, desegregation efforts, and the possibility of a truly "alternative" moviegoing experience for African Americans are too often overlooked in textbook accounts of film exhibition. To Gomery's credit, he brings these topics to the fore, though here, as throughout *Shared Pleasures*, there is very little that might be called ideological or cultural analysis of movie exhibition. He is satisfied with articulating a "historical overview" (xviii)—a legitimate goal and, it seems to me, an essential foundation for speculations focused more specifically on the ideological import of the movies and the experience of moviegoing.

Similarly, when Gomery moves to the third part of *Shared Pleasures*, which focuses on "technological transformations," he examines the process of "invention, innovation, and diffusion" (xxi) without taking up the ideological/psychoanalytic significance of the basic cinematic apparatus and the aesthetic ramifications of technological changes. As would be expected, given Gomery's previous research, *Shared Pleasures* includes particularly cogent discussions of sound, wide-screen processes, color, and the presentation of movies on television. One of his stated goals is to "blur the usual distinction made between film studies and television studies" (xxi)—not in terms of interpretive strategies but in terms of business history. And here, too, Gomery succeeds, offering a convincing case that "the major Hollywood companies were the big winners in the world of the new television technologies" (295). What this victory might mean socially, culturally, and aesthetically for moviegoers and moviemakers is another question. To Gomery's credit, *Shared Pleasures* puts us in a position to be able to ask that and a host of other important questions about movie presentation in the United States.

GREGORY A. WALLER

■ Gregory A. Waller teaches at the University of Kentucky.

## Stardom
### Industry of Desire

Edited by Christine Gledhill. New York: Routledge, 1991. $16.95.

## Making Visible the Invisible
### An Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting

Edited by Carole Zucker. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1990. $39.00.

Traditionally a staple of fanzines and television talk shows, the discussion of movie acting and Hollywood stardom has begun to move into the realm of academic discourse. The subject has been given a new depth in Richard Dyer's groundbreaking studies and in James Naremore's recent *Acting in the Cinema*. The two collections under review here amply demonstrate that the topic of film performance and its cultural meanings lends itself to serious intellectual inquiry, but they also suggest some of the limitations currently holding back this provocative area of scholarship.

*Stardom* is weighted toward poststructuralist theory on the one hand and empirical sociological studies on the other, while many of the essays in *Making Visible the Invisible* rely on traditional New-Critical readings of performance, often using frame enlargements to good advantage as evidence. Both books include essays that explicate major theoretical issues which they apply to acting and stardom in illuminating ways. Especially note-

worthy examples in Gledhill include Jackie Stacey's consideration of identification and the discussions of individualism by Richard Dyer and by Gledhill herself. Zucker's volume offers Angela Dalle Vacche's explication of Althusserian historiography, Bart Testa's comments on point of view, Roberta Pearson's application of semiotic theory to performance, and Thomas Waugh's remarks on collaboration in documentary.

As part of her volume's focus on empirical data, Gledhill has provided essays containing useful information on the phenomenon of stardom: Thomas Harris on the Hollywood publicity machine, Charles Eckert, Charlotte Herzog, and Jane Gaines on techniques of linking stars to consumer goods, and Janet Staiger and Richard deCordova on the circumstances surrounding the emergence of movie stars as a cultural phenomenon in the early years of the century. Gledhill is also careful to include material on minority issues and on television performance.

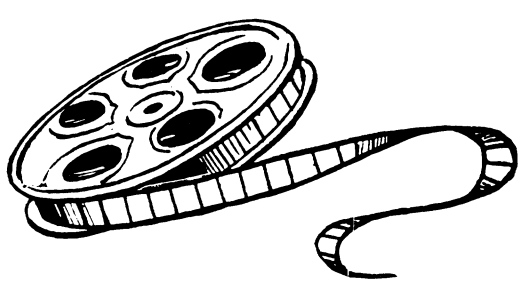
Each collection betrays telling weaknesses as well as strengths. Zucker's volume repeatedly raises the problem of defining authorship. All films are, more or less, group endeavors, and the contributions of actors as opposed to directors, writers, cinematographers, costumers, make-up people, coaches, and the rest are notoriously difficult to isolate. Many of the pieces Zucker includes (for example, Falsetto, Tomlinson, Testa, Zucker, and Larue) come out of the auteur tradition and focus their arguments around inconclusive efforts to disentangle acting from directing in the filmic texts they explore. Predictably, the directors usually come out ahead.

The essays in the Gledhill volume, informed for the most part by a poststructuralist skepticism about the validity of concepts of subjectivity and agency, tend to deal with stardom as a phenomenon related to issues of spectatorship rather than authorship. Spectatorship raises its own problems, which are just beginning to be explored in cinema studies. Departing from the universalized Mulveyan psychoanalytic paradigm, many of these essays attempt to render more particularized portraits of audiences and their relation to works. To this end Jackie Stacey discusses fan letters she has solicited, Tessa Perkins relies on reviews from the popular press, Andrea Weiss draws on oral histories, and Karen Alexander turns to autobiographical reminiscences. These studies pose a number of questions. Who or what does such evidence represent? And how is it to be interpreted? None of these essays is able to provide wholly satisfactory resolutions to these issues. Most disappointingly, this kind of approach tends to produce readings of star texts and their audiences which are comparatively simple, even self-evident. To be sure, this charge is commonly leveled by humanities scholars against all empirically based social-science analysis, and the social scientists respond that dullness is the price of certainty. But cinema scholars are accustomed to more complexity in their encounters with textual interpretation than the sociological method may be able to deliver.

What is most disturbing in both of these anthologies, however, is not their inability to position performers as authors or to present a compelling depiction of engagement of specific audiences with the movies they watch; rather it is their failure to make themselves part of an ongoing scholarly enterprise. Neither editor supplies the kind of substantial introduction which could locate the essays she has selected within a history of the subject and past treatments of it. Zucker even neglects to include a bibliography. Individual essays not only do not refer to one another, they rarely allude to other work in the field (admirable exceptions include Barry King's "Articulating Stardom" and Thomas Waugh's piece on documentary). Balázs, Pudovkin, and Morin have produced acknowledged classics in this area, yet these works still await thoughtful published commentary. Many contributors to both of these new volumes also systematically ignore significant published work dealing with the stars, directors, or specific issues they treat. One senses a special difficulty with the Zucker anthology, which has all the signs of a collection delayed somewhere for many years. Nineteen eighty-five is the most recent date cited in most of the essays; some deal with even older sources, with 1981 the most recent citation for Jerome Delameter, 1980 for Mario Falsetto, and 1977 for Noël Carroll. In a volume that purports to contain original essays rather than reprints, such signs of age nullify any claim it may have to be a showcase for cutting-edge thinking. If scholarship is concerned with building a body of knowledge, many of the essays in both of these volumes would be better considered as journalism, some of them out-of-date journalism at that. To bring the discussion of acting and stardom out of the realm of fanzine culture, we need to do better than this.

VIRGINIA WRIGHT WEXMAN

■ Virginia Wright Wexman teaches at the University of Illinois in Chicago.



# Men, Women, and Chain Saws
## Gender in the Modern Horror Film

By Carol J. Clover. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992. $19.95.

Once derided by respectable critics for its femininity, Gothic horror is today a film genre more typically blamed for masculine sadism. In this genre famous for its "scream queens" mauled by monsters, most contemporary critics have assumed that since women are its traditional abject victims, the genre is, rather like pornography, "bad" to women. They assume also an easy equation between the enjoyment of horror and a masculinity of acting and doing. One of the great advantages of Carol J. Clover's new book on horror cinema, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film*, is its refusal to engage in the fashionable swings of gender blame that have characterized so much work on popular genres. Instead, Clover offers a revolutionary investigation into the complex dynamics of gender and genre.

In an earlier article on the contemporary "slasher" film, Clover noticed something previous critics had ignored: how powerfully a supposed masculine viewer (most often an adolescent male) casts his emotional lot with a figure she dubs the "female-victim-hero." This surviving "final girl," who frequently turns the phallic knife or chain saw back on the monster is, in the end, anything but passive and not very "feminine." Thus where traditional views of the horror genre have simply polarized gender into active male monster and passive female victim, Clover's analysis of the low exploitative subgenre of the slasher film discovers the poles of active/passive, masculine/feminine to be less neat. While "abject terror is gendered feminine," the "final girl" is a contradictory victim-hero with whom adolescent viewers are strangely willing to identify. And part of the thrill and danger of this genre seem to lie in the roller-coaster ride that careens between these poles.

In this book-length expansion of her ground-breaking slasher article, Clover reaches ambitiously beyond her original intent to a major reconsideration of the masochistic pleasures of horror. No longer just a study of slashers or even of low-budget, exploitation horror, this book now encompasses big-budget "occult" or "possession" films—where women are possessed by supernatural forces—as well as the rape-revenge subgenre. A final chapter, "The Eye of Horror," explores the implications of her observations on genre in relation to the central place of "the gaze" in theories of cinema.

In the first chapter on the slasher film, entitled "Her Body, Himself," Clover offers her central argument that horror films are more victim-identified than most critics and most viewers of the genre have thought. The chapter explains this pleasure in a detailed elaboration of the masochistic pleasures of film viewing. This turn to masochism is, in itself, not new. For some time now, film critics and theorists have been whittling away at the Mulveyan paradigm that aligned the narrative pleasure of cinema with masculine sadistic mastery and voyeurism. But for reasons excellently detailed in Clover's text, the paradigm has remained in place. Clover's book should change this in a way that Gaylyn Studlar's study of the "Masochistic Aesthetic" has not. For in contrast to Studlar, Clover has taken the genre most closely associated with sadism to show how crucial masochistic pleasures have been to the thrill of watching horror. Remarkably, this thrill has been little explored in genre study. Clover explains that the low status of horror vis-à-vis a more "normal" and "dominant" model of realist film has operated to prevent the kind of analysis that she so beautifully carries out.

The second chapter, "Opening Up," on the occult or possession film, explores what is in many ways the flip side of the castration-centered, psychoanalytically oriented first chapter. While the slasher subgenre codes the abject terror of the victim as feminine and her hero status as masculine, the occult film concentrates on a male in crisis who, in attempting to rescue the possessed woman, becomes more feminine. This subgenre (*The Exorcist* and *Poltergeist* series as well as the lesser-known *Witchboard*) codes emotional and bodily openness as feminine. Clover's point about both subgenres is the way they reimagine gender. The slasher's final girl becomes more masculine, while the occult film's male-in-crisis, who rescues the possessed woman, becomes more feminine. Where the woman in the slasher subgenre stops running and faces her assailant, the man in the occult subgenre "opens up" amid an iconography of passageways, interiors, pregnancy, and birth.

In this chapter Clover introduces Thomas Lacquer's "one sex" model of sexuality as a means of explaining aspects of nondifferentiation or bisexuality not accounted for by the Freudian model that sees woman's difference as castration and "lack." Though this model is no less patriarchal than the Freudian, since the "one sex" paradigm of medieval science is modeled on the male body, it has the advantage of explaining aspects of horror that are less interested in what women "lack" than in what they have hidden (occulted) inside. Clover's novel idea is that the occult subgenre, relying upon an archaic one-sex model of sexuality, has a specific language and set of

tropes for the "hidden things" of women. Indeed, in the possession film, it is man who functions as the negative entity—the not-woman. The occult film's paradoxical project is thus, as Clover puts it, to "tell a one sex story in a two sex world."

While the one-sex model proves in some ways a fruitful alternative to psychoanalytic theories that often seem to repeat the same Oedipal story of castration and lack, the appeal to a one-sex model of sexuality tends to explain what are very contemporary phenomena in terms of an anachronistic medieval model. While I understand how the occult interest in insides makes this model attractive, Clover still makes appeal to Freud—the Freud of the essay on the Uncanny and of "A Child Is Being Beaten"—for the more successful explanations of less sexually differentiated, merged male fantasies of femaleness animated by this subgenre. Rather than concluding, anachronistically, that contemporary horror attempts to "tell a one sex story in a two sex world," Clover might have done better to expand her paradigm to include a multi-sex, postmodern, "bodies without organs" model to show how contemporary horror flirts with transgressive gay, lesbian, bisexual, and even hermaphroditic sexual stories in a world that no longer reduces to either one or two.

Clover's chapter on the rape-revenge subgenre, "Getting Even," is her most fascinating and audacious. Citing films as diverse as *I Spit on Your Grave*, *MS 45*, *Extremities*, *The Accused*, and *Sudden Impact*, and relating them all to the precursor text of *Deliverance* and its country/city, masculine/feminine antinomies, Clover argues that the emergence of rape as a subject in popular culture, and of female rape revenge in these particular films, coincides with its link to a retaliation plot coded as an action genre. While the upscale versions of this narrative are categorized as action or suspense, the low-budget versions with almost identical plots are categorized as horror or cult films. Her point about these films is that all force a high degree of imaginary participation in the experience of being raped, asking viewers to identify first as powerless victims, then as empowered seekers of revenge. Abject terror is again gendered feminine with the invitation to viewers, male and female alike, to identify first with the femininity of the male *or* female rape victim and then with the masculine position of the revenge seeker. Thus while gender is important as a fluctuating position, sex as a fixed biological given is not.

Clover argues that the self-saving "final girl" of the slasher film and the self-avenging rape victim of the rape-revenge film represent a major shift in popular consciousness brought about by the women's movement. Because of a confluence of other factors, including the class, racial, and ecological backstories of America's rape of the land, rape of the racial other, and rape of the working class—all of which have been variously justified or condemned in major works of American mass culture—Clover argues the importance of viewing the revenge for the rape of women as linked to larger scenarios of American self-consciousness such as the Western. (Though *Thelma & Louise* appeared as Clover's book was already in press and is mentioned only briefly in her conclusion, it stands as magnificent proof of the validity of her argument.)

Clover's final chapter, "The Eye of Horror," is an extended analysis of a few highly self-reflexive horror films as a means of summarizing and extending the insights of the rest of her book. In this chapter, Clover brilliantly mines predominantly self-reflexive horror films for their metacommentary on the genre and the medium. Using non-American films beyond the strict purview of her study—Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* and Dario Argento's *Demons*—as metacommentaries on the perils and pleasures of horror spectatorship, Clover theorizes the masochistic pleasure of being "assaulted" in the eye. Using horror's own metacommentary on itself to augment the blind spots of theories of spectatorship by Metz and Mulvey, she asserts the importance of "failed gazing." These are gazes, like Mark's in *Peeping Tom*, that do not master their objects of vision but are reactive and introjective repetition compulsions representing a very different kind of mastery: not the sadist's mastery of the feminine, but the masochist's mastery of an ongoing fear and pain.

It is here that Clover, rather late in the book, makes her most important claim: feminist and psychoanalytic film theory has been blind to the masochistic and feminine gendered pleasures of film viewing in part because the genres that could most illustrate these pleasures—horror (and, I would add, pornography)—have been so maligned. Yet, as Clover puts it, these genres "tell" on the others: they reveal the remarkable degree to which spectators do not identify as active and powerful, do not distance themselves with the gaze. In modern horror films the virtual disappearance of male heroes from the rape-revenge and slasher films brings out into the open the pleasure/pain nature of cross-gender identification. Why, then, has this identification been so elided in film theory and criticism? Clover suggests that the reason is a reluctance to theorize masochism. In the name of feminism, film theory and criticism has glossed over the pleasure of pain for male and female viewers alike. "Rather than expose the cultural lie on which higher forms of cinema are based, film theory has wittingly or unwittingly colluded with it. . . . " The result has been a dominant theory of cinematic pleasure as sadistic mastery and aggressive voyeurism that has ignored such vivid moments as the frightened voice of Mark at the end of *Peeping Tom* saying, "Goodnight, Daddy—hold my hand."

Not the least of the pleasures of reading this book consists in Clover's remarkable talent for engaging a general reader in the intrinsic interest of violent horror. She understands what some feminists, eager to condemn a masculine power easily aligned with sadistic mastery, do not: the pleasures of horror experienced from the gendered feminine position, even for women. Neither sensationalizing nor romanticizing the genre, Clover explains this pleasure. She fascinates us initially with the uncanny effects of the material, the fundamental paradox of the enjoyment of horror, then weaves often complex theoretical arguments through to the end. There is a point about halfway through each chapter when the theoretical plot thickens as Clover brings to bear necessary concepts—from psychoanalysis, from the history of sexuality, from other genres, from feminist theorists of gender. Unlike so many books on cinema, this one does not use films to illustrate theory; films function here to interrogate theories that are often found inadequate to the complexities of generic pleasures.

My only substantive criticism of the book's structure is that this final chapter is too important to have saved for last. The concepts of active, assaultive gaze and reactive, introjective gaze could have been useful throughout the book. Introduced here at the end, they cannot be used to illuminate each of Clover's subgenres. The slasher chapter, especially, should have been rewritten with these lessons in mind. The reader needs a chance to link up the somewhat generalized discussion of masochism in the first chapter with the more film theoretical discussion here.

A few other quibbles could be mentioned: the role of the important precursor texts in each subgenre—of *Psycho* to the contemporary slasher, of *Deliverance* to rape revenge, of *Dracula* to possession and occult films—could be more extensively explored. Given the importance of Clover's argument that low horror permits the genre to say more about gender than high horror permits, it is a shame that we do not hear more about the dynamic between high and low that is so rich in her first chapter. And finally, there is the over-prominent model of masochism itself. In her efforts to disengage horror from the model of sadism, Clover may swing too far toward the masochistic pleasures of her (perhaps over-) emphasized adolescent male viewer, thus ignoring the sadomasochistic pleasures of a genre with an even more polymorphously perverse appeal than the model of masochism alone permits.

But these are, indeed, quibbles. In the growing momentum of new studies of popular, literally sensational, entertainment forms, Clover's book can be compared favorably to Rick Altman's *American Film Musical*, Jane Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical*, and Robert Allen's excellent book on burlesque, *Horrible Prettiness*.

Though its main title, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, sounds crude, the book is remarkably subtle about gender, containing many long-term implications for a film theory that can finally be "gendered feminine."

LINDA WILLIAMS

■ Linda Williams is a member of the editorial board of *Film Quarterly*.

# Book Notes

Contributors to Book Notes:
Johnny D. Boggs is a Dallas-based free-lance writer; Brian Henderson is a member of *FQ*'s editorial board; James L. Neibaur is a film historian; Mark A. Reid teaches at the University of Florida-Gainesville; Gregg Rickman is working on a book about Philip K. Dick.

Klotman, Phyllis Rauch (ed). *Screenplays of the African American Experience*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $14.95 paper. Another in the *Blacks in the Diaspora* series, *Screenplays of the African American Experience* brings together an interesting collection of black independent film scenarios for movies made between 1973 and 1989. Klotman has wisely selected screenplays written by both men and women. The collection includes Bill Gunn's avant-garde horror film *Ganja and Hess* (1973) and Charles Burnett's darkly humorous neo-realist *Killer of Sheep* (1977). Alile Sharon Larkin's *A Different Image* (1981), Kathleen Collins' *Losing Ground* (1982), and Julie Dash's *Illusions* (1983) explore black womanist themes. Finally, Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Stories* (1989) uses a Chaplinesque comic style to portray the plight of the homeless. As a collection, the six screenplays show how black American film-makers dramatized issues of race, gender, and class a decade before such terms as postcolonial, multicultural, and other politically correct phraseologies became fashionable and academically chic.

Since *Screenplays of the African American Experience* stresses the literary over the cinematographic aspects of the six screenplays, the text would be most useful in courses which stress the narrative aspects of black, ethnic, and women's films. The weaknesses of this book are minor, but one in particular needs to be indicated: the absence of any list of books, dissertations, scholarly

Not the least of the pleasures of reading this book consists in Clover's remarkable talent for engaging a general reader in the intrinsic interest of violent horror. She understands what some feminists, eager to condemn a masculine power easily aligned with sadistic mastery, do not: the pleasures of horror experienced from the gendered feminine position, even for women. Neither sensationalizing nor romanticizing the genre, Clover explains this pleasure. She fascinates us initially with the uncanny effects of the material, the fundamental paradox of the enjoyment of horror, then weaves often complex theoretical arguments through to the end. There is a point about halfway through each chapter when the theoretical plot thickens as Clover brings to bear necessary concepts—from psychoanalysis, from the history of sexuality, from other genres, from feminist theorists of gender. Unlike so many books on cinema, this one does not use films to illustrate theory; films function here to interrogate theories that are often found inadequate to the complexities of generic pleasures.

My only substantive criticism of the book's structure is that this final chapter is too important to have saved for last. The concepts of active, assaultive gaze and reactive, introjective gaze could have been useful throughout the book. Introduced here at the end, they cannot be used to illuminate each of Clover's subgenres. The slasher chapter, especially, should have been rewritten with these lessons in mind. The reader needs a chance to link up the somewhat generalized discussion of masochism in the first chapter with the more film theoretical discussion here.

A few other quibbles could be mentioned: the role of the important precursor texts in each subgenre—of *Psycho* to the contemporary slasher, of *Deliverance* to rape revenge, of *Dracula* to possession and occult films—could be more extensively explored. Given the importance of Clover's argument that low horror permits the genre to say more about gender than high horror permits, it is a shame that we do not hear more about the dynamic between high and low that is so rich in her first chapter. And finally, there is the over-prominent model of masochism itself. In her efforts to disengage horror from the model of sadism, Clover may swing too far toward the masochistic pleasures of her (perhaps over-) emphasized adolescent male viewer, thus ignoring the sadomasochistic pleasures of a genre with an even more polymorphously perverse appeal than the model of masochism alone permits.

But these are, indeed, quibbles. In the growing momentum of new studies of popular, literally sensational, entertainment forms, Clover's book can be compared favorably to Rick Altman's *American Film Musical*, Jane Feuer's *The Hollywood Musical*, and Robert Allen's excellent book on burlesque, *Horrible Prettiness*.

Though its main title, *Men, Women, and Chain Saws*, sounds crude, the book is remarkably subtle about gender, containing many long-term implications for a film theory that can finally be "gendered feminine."

LINDA WILLIAMS

■ Linda Williams is a member of the editorial board of *Film Quarterly*.

# Book Notes

Contributors to Book Notes:
Johnny D. Boggs is a Dallas-based free-lance writer; Brian Henderson is a member of *FQ*'s editorial board; James L. Neibaur is a film historian; Mark A. Reid teaches at the University of Florida-Gainesville; Gregg Rickman is working on a book about Philip K. Dick.

Klotman, Phyllis Rauch (ed). *Screenplays of the African American Experience*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991. $39.95 cloth; $14.95 paper. Another in the *Blacks in the Diaspora* series, *Screenplays of the African American Experience* brings together an interesting collection of black independent film scenarios for movies made between 1973 and 1989. Klotman has wisely selected screenplays written by both men and women. The collection includes Bill Gunn's avant-garde horror film *Ganja and Hess* (1973) and Charles Burnett's darkly humorous neo-realist *Killer of Sheep* (1977). Alile Sharon Larkin's *A Different Image* (1981), Kathleen Collins' *Losing Ground* (1982), and Julie Dash's *Illusions* (1983) explore black womanist themes. Finally, Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Stories* (1989) uses a Chaplinesque comic style to portray the plight of the homeless. As a collection, the six screenplays show how black American film-makers dramatized issues of race, gender, and class a decade before such terms as postcolonial, multicultural, and other politically correct phraseologies became fashionable and academically chic.

Since *Screenplays of the African American Experience* stresses the literary over the cinematographic aspects of the six screenplays, the text would be most useful in courses which stress the narrative aspects of black, ethnic, and women's films. The weaknesses of this book are minor, but one in particular needs to be indicated: the absence of any list of books, dissertations, scholarly

articles, or film reviews dealing with the six film-makers and their films. These observations, however, are minor next to the fact that this is the first collection of black independent screenplays.

MARK A. REID

Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood.* New York: Facts on File, 1991. $135. (Two volumes) This updated reference, initially published in 1976, purports to list every Hollywood performer in the history of motion pictures with relevant data in a mammoth two-volume collection. After a long list of acknowledgments, the author states that information contained therein is current as of April 1991. Some of the entries are several paragraphs long while other descriptions are only one word ("Character" or "Juvenile").

While such a reference is a massive undertaking, some of the book's many errors could have been avoided through some minor double-checking. The birth dates for Chico and Harpo Marx are incorrect, while many performers long deceased are listed as still living (Matthew Garber, Doris Packer, etc.). There are also curious death dates for silent performers Dorothy Dwan and Fred Church, which had not been found by other necrologists. Several players are not included at all, and while some of these may simply be the "lost" players for whom Ragan admits in an epilogue to still be seeking, the exclusion of Al Jolson has to be an oversight (Jolson was included in the 1976 edition).

The author will occasionally offer somewhat dubious opinions, such as calling silent-screen comic Larry Semon "just one step behind Chaplin and Keaton," but in spite of its foibles and errors, the reference does provide important info on most of the performers listed, along with such interesting trivia as the late John Cazale being engaged to Meryl Streep at the time of his death; or that RKO comic Parkyakarkus was the father of Bob "Super Dave Osborne" Einstein and Albert Brooks (whose real name is Albert Einstein). There is a bibliography which lists books and periodicals.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Siegel, Jeff. *The Casablanca Companion: The Movie and More.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1992. $9.95. Jeff Siegel and Taylor Publishing have put together a solid account of the making of one of Hollywood's best-loved movies. *The Casablanca Companion* is entertaining and informative, geared toward film buffs and Humphrey Bogart fans more than cinema scholars. The book is an easy read, only six chapters long, and spaced with "trivia interludes," "quick takes" and black-and-white photos. Although hurt by limited resources, Siegel offers insight into the filming of *Casablanca*, from the casting rumors to the script debates, and tries to explain why the movie remains so popular today, 50 years after its release.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Slide, Anthony. *The Television Industry: A Historical Dictionary.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. $59.50. A dictionary (self-styled) without a precise object corresponding to it: a very strange book. There's nothing on Lee De Forest and the other inventors of the medium and, aside from a few lines on The Camera Tube and The Cathode-Ray Tube, next to nothing on the technical development of the medium, including broadcast technology, and next to nothing on the regulation and censorship of television. David Sarnoff, the most important manager in the history of television, is squeezed into a three-page appendix with William S. Paley and Leonard H. Goldenson, as though they did not belong in the dictionary proper! The principal inclusions are presently operating American and British production companies, with current addresses provided. Calling itself a guidebook to such companies would have helped those desiring such information and avoided confusion for those not.

BRIAN HENDERSON

Spoto, Donald. *Laurence Olivier: A Biography.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. $23. This well-written, well-researched biography of the late actor is full of fascinating information on every aspect of Olivier's life, most particularly his acting career and how out of an unhappy life he molded both a great career and a towering reputation. Spoto has done his homework and it shows in his background material on the British stage, a half-century of its history serving as backdrop for Olivier's genius.

Unlike Spoto's famous, or notorious, biography of Alfred Hitchcock, *The Dark Side of Genius*, this volume's revelations about Lord Olivier's personal life are untainted by shocked disapproval. (Spoto, in line with his earlier work on masculinity in the cinema, is completely sympathetic to Olivier's bisexuality, and not at all prurient in the details he provides.) However, he says little to link Olivier's life and work. His comments on Olivier as a film director, *Henry V* and *Richard III* aside, are particularly cursory, either as biographical fodder or critical analysis (Spoto is much better, in this regard, in treating Olivier's acting career). This tendency bottoms out with a brief mention that "he directed" a film of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, period. Inasmuch as Spoto comments on Olivier's performance therein, one must assume that the film exists and that he saw it. It thus ought to be worth at least a paragraph of commentary in a volume where we learn a great deal more about Olivier's participation in a variety of rubbishy entertainments.

GREGG RICKMAN

articles, or film reviews dealing with the six film-makers and their films. These observations, however, are minor next to the fact that this is the first collection of black independent screenplays.

MARK A. REID

Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood.* New York: Facts on File, 1991. $135. (Two volumes) This updated reference, initially published in 1976, purports to list every Hollywood performer in the history of motion pictures with relevant data in a mammoth two-volume collection. After a long list of acknowledgments, the author states that information contained therein is current as of April 1991. Some of the entries are several paragraphs long while other descriptions are only one word ("Character" or "Juvenile").

While such a reference is a massive undertaking, some of the book's many errors could have been avoided through some minor double-checking. The birth dates for Chico and Harpo Marx are incorrect, while many performers long deceased are listed as still living (Matthew Garber, Doris Packer, etc.). There are also curious death dates for silent performers Dorothy Dwan and Fred Church, which had not been found by other necrologists. Several players are not included at all, and while some of these may simply be the "lost" players for whom Ragan admits in an epilogue to still be seeking, the exclusion of Al Jolson has to be an oversight (Jolson was included in the 1976 edition).

The author will occasionally offer somewhat dubious opinions, such as calling silent-screen comic Larry Semon "just one step behind Chaplin and Keaton," but in spite of its foibles and errors, the reference does provide important info on most of the performers listed, along with such interesting trivia as the late John Cazale being engaged to Meryl Streep at the time of his death; or that RKO comic Parkyakarkus was the father of Bob "Super Dave Osborne" Einstein and Albert Brooks (whose real name is Albert Einstein). There is a bibliography which lists books and periodicals.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Siegel, Jeff. *The Casablanca Companion: The Movie and More.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1992. $9.95. Jeff Siegel and Taylor Publishing have put together a solid account of the making of one of Hollywood's best-loved movies. *The Casablanca Companion* is entertaining and informative, geared toward film buffs and Humphrey Bogart fans more than cinema scholars. The book is an easy read, only six chapters long, and spaced with "trivia interludes," "quick takes" and black-and-white photos. Although hurt by limited resources, Siegel offers insight into the filming of *Casablanca*, from the casting rumors to the script debates, and tries to explain why the movie remains so popular today, 50 years after its release.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Slide, Anthony. *The Television Industry: A Historical Dictionary.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. $59.50. A dictionary (self-styled) without a precise object corresponding to it: a very strange book. There's nothing on Lee De Forest and the other inventors of the medium and, aside from a few lines on The Camera Tube and The Cathode-Ray Tube, next to nothing on the technical development of the medium, including broadcast technology, and next to nothing on the regulation and censorship of television. David Sarnoff, the most important manager in the history of television, is squeezed into a three-page appendix with William S. Paley and Leonard H. Goldenson, as though they did not belong in the dictionary proper! The principal inclusions are presently operating American and British production companies, with current addresses provided. Calling itself a guidebook to such companies would have helped those desiring such information and avoided confusion for those not.

BRIAN HENDERSON

Spoto, Donald. *Laurence Olivier: A Biography.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. $23. This well-written, well-researched biography of the late actor is full of fascinating information on every aspect of Olivier's life, most particularly his acting career and how out of an unhappy life he molded both a great career and a towering reputation. Spoto has done his homework and it shows in his background material on the British stage, a half-century of its history serving as backdrop for Olivier's genius.

Unlike Spoto's famous, or notorious, biography of Alfred Hitchcock, *The Dark Side of Genius*, this volume's revelations about Lord Olivier's personal life are untainted by shocked disapproval. (Spoto, in line with his earlier work on masculinity in the cinema, is completely sympathetic to Olivier's bisexuality, and not at all prurient in the details he provides.) However, he says little to link Olivier's life and work. His comments on Olivier as a film director, *Henry V* and *Richard III* aside, are particularly cursory, either as biographical fodder or critical analysis (Spoto is much better, in this regard, in treating Olivier's acting career). This tendency bottoms out with a brief mention that "he directed" a film of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, period. Inasmuch as Spoto comments on Olivier's performance therein, one must assume that the film exists and that he saw it. It thus ought to be worth at least a paragraph of commentary in a volume where we learn a great deal more about Olivier's participation in a variety of rubbishy entertainments.

GREGG RICKMAN

articles, or film reviews dealing with the six film-makers and their films. These observations, however, are minor next to the fact that this is the first collection of black independent screenplays.

MARK A. REID

Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood.* New York: Facts on File, 1991. $135. (Two volumes) This updated reference, initially published in 1976, purports to list every Hollywood performer in the history of motion pictures with relevant data in a mammoth two-volume collection. After a long list of acknowledgments, the author states that information contained therein is current as of April 1991. Some of the entries are several paragraphs long while other descriptions are only one word ("Character" or "Juvenile").

While such a reference is a massive undertaking, some of the book's many errors could have been avoided through some minor double-checking. The birth dates for Chico and Harpo Marx are incorrect, while many performers long deceased are listed as still living (Matthew Garber, Doris Packer, etc.). There are also curious death dates for silent performers Dorothy Dwan and Fred Church, which had not been found by other necrologists. Several players are not included at all, and while some of these may simply be the "lost" players for whom Ragan admits in an epilogue to still be seeking, the exclusion of Al Jolson has to be an oversight (Jolson was included in the 1976 edition).

The author will occasionally offer somewhat dubious opinions, such as calling silent-screen comic Larry Semon "just one step behind Chaplin and Keaton," but in spite of its foibles and errors, the reference does provide important info on most of the performers listed, along with such interesting trivia as the late John Cazale being engaged to Meryl Streep at the time of his death; or that RKO comic Parkyakarkus was the father of Bob "Super Dave Osborne" Einstein and Albert Brooks (whose real name is Albert Einstein). There is a bibliography which lists books and periodicals.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Siegel, Jeff. *The Casablanca Companion: The Movie and More.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1992. $9.95. Jeff Siegel and Taylor Publishing have put together a solid account of the making of one of Hollywood's best-loved movies. *The Casablanca Companion* is entertaining and informative, geared toward film buffs and Humphrey Bogart fans more than cinema scholars. The book is an easy read, only six chapters long, and spaced with "trivia interludes," "quick takes" and black-and-white photos. Although hurt by limited resources, Siegel offers insight into the filming of *Casablanca*, from the casting rumors to the script debates, and tries to explain why the movie remains so popular today, 50 years after its release.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Slide, Anthony. *The Television Industry: A Historical Dictionary.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. $59.50. A dictionary (self-styled) without a precise object corresponding to it: a very strange book. There's nothing on Lee De Forest and the other inventors of the medium and, aside from a few lines on The Camera Tube and The Cathode-Ray Tube, next to nothing on the technical development of the medium, including broadcast technology, and next to nothing on the regulation and censorship of television. David Sarnoff, the most important manager in the history of television, is squeezed into a three-page appendix with William S. Paley and Leonard H. Goldenson, as though they did not belong in the dictionary proper! The principal inclusions are presently operating American and British production companies, with current addresses provided. Calling itself a guidebook to such companies would have helped those desiring such information and avoided confusion for those not.

BRIAN HENDERSON

Spoto, Donald. *Laurence Olivier: A Biography.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. $23. This well-written, well-researched biography of the late actor is full of fascinating information on every aspect of Olivier's life, most particularly his acting career and how out of an unhappy life he molded both a great career and a towering reputation. Spoto has done his homework and it shows in his background material on the British stage, a half-century of its history serving as backdrop for Olivier's genius.

Unlike Spoto's famous, or notorious, biography of Alfred Hitchcock, *The Dark Side of Genius*, this volume's revelations about Lord Olivier's personal life are untainted by shocked disapproval. (Spoto, in line with his earlier work on masculinity in the cinema, is completely sympathetic to Olivier's bisexuality, and not at all prurient in the details he provides.) However, he says little to link Olivier's life and work. His comments on Olivier as a film director, *Henry V* and *Richard III* aside, are particularly cursory, either as biographical fodder or critical analysis (Spoto is much better, in this regard, in treating Olivier's acting career). This tendency bottoms out with a brief mention that "he directed" a film of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, period. Inasmuch as Spoto comments on Olivier's performance therein, one must assume that the film exists and that he saw it. It thus ought to be worth at least a paragraph of commentary in a volume where we learn a great deal more about Olivier's participation in a variety of rubbishy entertainments.

GREGG RICKMAN

articles, or film reviews dealing with the six film-makers and their films. These observations, however, are minor next to the fact that this is the first collection of black independent screenplays.

MARK A. REID

Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood.* New York: Facts on File, 1991. $135. (Two volumes) This updated reference, initially published in 1976, purports to list every Hollywood performer in the history of motion pictures with relevant data in a mammoth two-volume collection. After a long list of acknowledgments, the author states that information contained therein is current as of April 1991. Some of the entries are several paragraphs long while other descriptions are only one word ("Character" or "Juvenile").

While such a reference is a massive undertaking, some of the book's many errors could have been avoided through some minor double-checking. The birth dates for Chico and Harpo Marx are incorrect, while many performers long deceased are listed as still living (Matthew Garber, Doris Packer, etc.). There are also curious death dates for silent performers Dorothy Dwan and Fred Church, which had not been found by other necrologists. Several players are not included at all, and while some of these may simply be the "lost" players for whom Ragan admits in an epilogue to still be seeking, the exclusion of Al Jolson has to be an oversight (Jolson was included in the 1976 edition).

The author will occasionally offer somewhat dubious opinions, such as calling silent-screen comic Larry Semon "just one step behind Chaplin and Keaton," but in spite of its foibles and errors, the reference does provide important info on most of the performers listed, along with such interesting trivia as the late John Cazale being engaged to Meryl Streep at the time of his death; or that RKO comic Parkyakarkus was the father of Bob "Super Dave Osborne" Einstein and Albert Brooks (whose real name is Albert Einstein). There is a bibliography which lists books and periodicals.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Siegel, Jeff. *The Casablanca Companion: The Movie and More.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1992. $9.95. Jeff Siegel and Taylor Publishing have put together a solid account of the making of one of Hollywood's best-loved movies. *The Casablanca Companion* is entertaining and informative, geared toward film buffs and Humphrey Bogart fans more than cinema scholars. The book is an easy read, only six chapters long, and spaced with "trivia interludes," "quick takes" and black-and-white photos. Although hurt by limited resources, Siegel offers insight into the filming of *Casablanca*, from the casting rumors to the script debates, and tries to explain why the movie remains so popular today, 50 years after its release.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Slide, Anthony. *The Television Industry: A Historical Dictionary.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. $59.50. A dictionary (self-styled) without a precise object corresponding to it: a very strange book. There's nothing on Lee De Forest and the other inventors of the medium and, aside from a few lines on The Camera Tube and The Cathode-Ray Tube, next to nothing on the technical development of the medium, including broadcast technology, and next to nothing on the regulation and censorship of television. David Sarnoff, the most important manager in the history of television, is squeezed into a three-page appendix with William S. Paley and Leonard H. Goldenson, as though they did not belong in the dictionary proper! The principal inclusions are presently operating American and British production companies, with current addresses provided. Calling itself a guidebook to such companies would have helped those desiring such information and avoided confusion for those not.

BRIAN HENDERSON

Spoto, Donald. *Laurence Olivier: A Biography.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. $23. This well-written, well-researched biography of the late actor is full of fascinating information on every aspect of Olivier's life, most particularly his acting career and how out of an unhappy life he molded both a great career and a towering reputation. Spoto has done his homework and it shows in his background material on the British stage, a half-century of its history serving as backdrop for Olivier's genius.

Unlike Spoto's famous, or notorious, biography of Alfred Hitchcock, *The Dark Side of Genius*, this volume's revelations about Lord Olivier's personal life are untainted by shocked disapproval. (Spoto, in line with his earlier work on masculinity in the cinema, is completely sympathetic to Olivier's bisexuality, and not at all prurient in the details he provides.) However, he says little to link Olivier's life and work. His comments on Olivier as a film director, *Henry V* and *Richard III* aside, are particularly cursory, either as biographical fodder or critical analysis (Spoto is much better, in this regard, in treating Olivier's acting career). This tendency bottoms out with a brief mention that "he directed" a film of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, period. Inasmuch as Spoto comments on Olivier's performance therein, one must assume that the film exists and that he saw it. It thus ought to be worth at least a paragraph of commentary in a volume where we learn a great deal more about Olivier's participation in a variety of rubbishy entertainments.

GREGG RICKMAN

articles, or film reviews dealing with the six film-makers and their films. These observations, however, are minor next to the fact that this is the first collection of black independent screenplays.

MARK A. REID

Ragan, David. *Who's Who in Hollywood.* New York: Facts on File, 1991. $135. (Two volumes) This updated reference, initially published in 1976, purports to list every Hollywood performer in the history of motion pictures with relevant data in a mammoth two-volume collection. After a long list of acknowledgments, the author states that information contained therein is current as of April 1991. Some of the entries are several paragraphs long while other descriptions are only one word ("Character" or "Juvenile").

While such a reference is a massive undertaking, some of the book's many errors could have been avoided through some minor double-checking. The birth dates for Chico and Harpo Marx are incorrect, while many performers long deceased are listed as still living (Matthew Garber, Doris Packer, etc.). There are also curious death dates for silent performers Dorothy Dwan and Fred Church, which had not been found by other necrologists. Several players are not included at all, and while some of these may simply be the "lost" players for whom Ragan admits in an epilogue to still be seeking, the exclusion of Al Jolson has to be an oversight (Jolson was included in the 1976 edition).

The author will occasionally offer somewhat dubious opinions, such as calling silent-screen comic Larry Semon "just one step behind Chaplin and Keaton," but in spite of its foibles and errors, the reference does provide important info on most of the performers listed, along with such interesting trivia as the late John Cazale being engaged to Meryl Streep at the time of his death; or that RKO comic Parkyakarkus was the father of Bob "Super Dave Osborne" Einstein and Albert Brooks (whose real name is Albert Einstein). There is a bibliography which lists books and periodicals.

JAMES L. NEIBAUR

Siegel, Jeff. *The Casablanca Companion: The Movie and More.* Dallas: Taylor Publishing, 1992. $9.95. Jeff Siegel and Taylor Publishing have put together a solid account of the making of one of Hollywood's best-loved movies. *The Casablanca Companion* is entertaining and informative, geared toward film buffs and Humphrey Bogart fans more than cinema scholars. The book is an easy read, only six chapters long, and spaced with "trivia interludes," "quick takes" and black-and-white photos. Although hurt by limited resources, Siegel offers insight into the filming of *Casablanca*, from the casting rumors to the script debates, and tries to explain why the movie remains so popular today, 50 years after its release.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Slide, Anthony. *The Television Industry: A Historical Dictionary.* Westport: Greenwood Press, 1991. $59.50. A dictionary (self-styled) without a precise object corresponding to it: a very strange book. There's nothing on Lee De Forest and the other inventors of the medium and, aside from a few lines on The Camera Tube and The Cathode-Ray Tube, next to nothing on the technical development of the medium, including broadcast technology, and next to nothing on the regulation and censorship of television. David Sarnoff, the most important manager in the history of television, is squeezed into a three-page appendix with William S. Paley and Leonard H. Goldenson, as though they did not belong in the dictionary proper! The principal inclusions are presently operating American and British production companies, with current addresses provided. Calling itself a guidebook to such companies would have helped those desiring such information and avoided confusion for those not.

BRIAN HENDERSON

Spoto, Donald. *Laurence Olivier: A Biography.* New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992. $23. This well-written, well-researched biography of the late actor is full of fascinating information on every aspect of Olivier's life, most particularly his acting career and how out of an unhappy life he molded both a great career and a towering reputation. Spoto has done his homework and it shows in his background material on the British stage, a half-century of its history serving as backdrop for Olivier's genius.

Unlike Spoto's famous, or notorious, biography of Alfred Hitchcock, *The Dark Side of Genius*, this volume's revelations about Lord Olivier's personal life are untainted by shocked disapproval. (Spoto, in line with his earlier work on masculinity in the cinema, is completely sympathetic to Olivier's bisexuality, and not at all prurient in the details he provides.) However, he says little to link Olivier's life and work. His comments on Olivier as a film director, *Henry V* and *Richard III* aside, are particularly cursory, either as biographical fodder or critical analysis (Spoto is much better, in this regard, in treating Olivier's acting career). This tendency bottoms out with a brief mention that "he directed" a film of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, period. Inasmuch as Spoto comments on Olivier's performance therein, one must assume that the film exists and that he saw it. It thus ought to be worth at least a paragraph of commentary in a volume where we learn a great deal more about Olivier's participation in a variety of rubbishy entertainments.

GREGG RICKMAN

**Gary Kulik, Editor • Mary Corbin Sies, Associate Editor**

Volume 44, Number 4, December 1992

## Hollywood, Censorship, and American Culture

*Daniel Czitrom* ✪ The Politics of Performance: From Theater Licensing to Movie Censorship in Turn-of-the-Century New York

*Francis G. Couvares* ✪ Hollywood,Main Street, and the Church: Trying to Censor the Movies before the Production Code

*Richard Maltby* ✪ "To Prevent the Prevalent Type of Book...": Censorship and Adaptation in Hollywood, 1924-1934

*Ruth Vasey* ✪ Foreign Parts: Hollywood's Global Distribution and the Representation of Ethnicity

*Clayton R. Koppes* ✪ Film Censorship: Beyond the Heroic Interpretation (book review)

**Ordering Information**

"Hollywood" issue: individuals, $8.50; institutions, $17.00.
Institutional subscriptions: $54.00 per year (four issues).
Become a member of the American Studies Association and receive *American Quarterly* as a benefit of membership. Three ways to order or to join:

- Call our toll-free number **(1-800-537-JHUP)**, 8:30-5:00 ET
- FAX us at **(410) 516-6998** any time
- Send payment or order to:

**The Johns Hopkins University Press**
**Journals Publishing Division**
**701 W. 40th Street, Suite 275**
**Baltimore, MD 21211-2190**

EA2

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS

# NOW YOU CAN STUDY MOVIES IN THE HEART OF THE SOUTHEAST

*Announcing a new program at*

## EMORY UNIVERSITY

*that awards the*

*M.A. in Film Studies*
*Ph.D. Certificate in Film Studies*

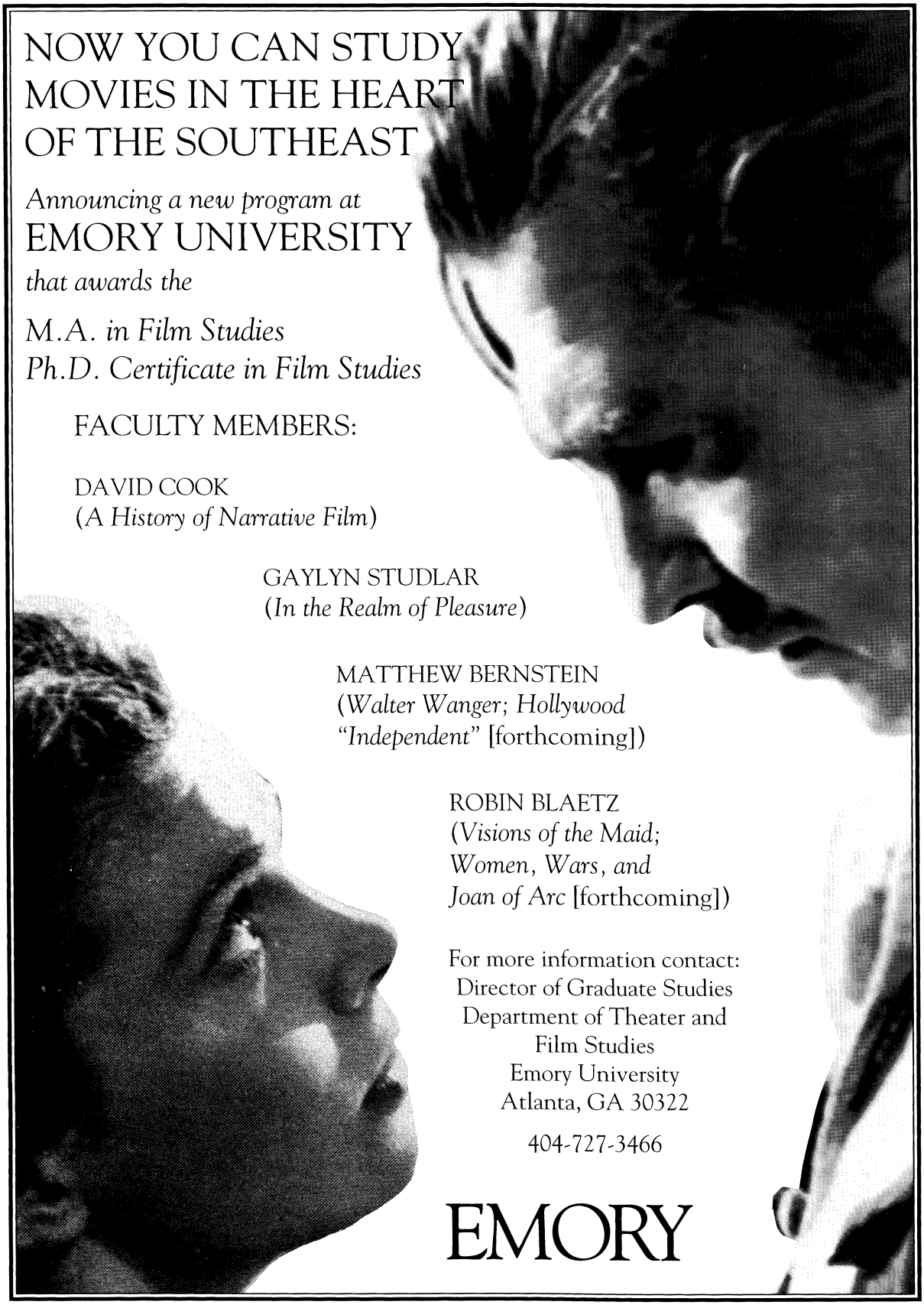
FACULTY MEMBERS:

DAVID COOK
(*A History of Narrative Film*)

GAYLYN STUDLAR
(*In the Realm of Pleasure*)

MATTHEW BERNSTEIN
(*Walter Wanger; Hollywood "Independent"* [forthcoming])

ROBIN BLAETZ
(*Visions of the Maid; Women, Wars, and Joan of Arc* [forthcoming])



For more information contact:
Director of Graduate Studies
Department of Theater and Film Studies
Emory University
Atlanta, GA 30322

404-727-3466

EMORY

# CHILD OF PARADISE

## Marcel Carné and the Golden Age of French Cinema

## Edward Baron Turk

Marcel Carné symbolizes the period, approximately 1930–1945, when French cinema recaptured the creative vitality and prestige it had relinquished almost completely to the American film industry. The first critical biography of this director relates the saga of Carné's meteoric rise in the 1930s and his decline from critical grace after the war. The book draws on unpublished correspondence from, among others, Jean Cocteau, François Truffaut, and Simone Signoret, and on interviews by the author with Arletty, Jean-Louis Barrault, Mme. Jacques Prévert, Pierre Prévert, Claude Renoir, Alexander Trauner, Truffaut, and Carné himself.

"Turk does a marvelous job integrating the personal, political and esthetic aspects of Carné's films to present a comprehensive picture of this important director's work."

—Peter Biskind, New York Times Book Review

117 halftones/$19.95 paper

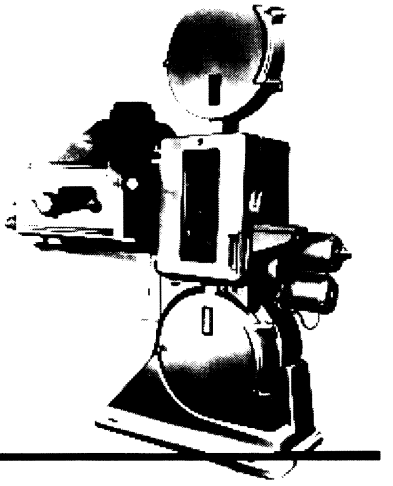
# WIDESCREEN CINEMA

## John Belton

Beginning with film's progress from peepshow to projection in 1896 and focusing on crucial stages in film history, John Belton puts widescreen cinema into its proper cultural context. He shows how such widescreen processes as Cinerama and VistaVision marked significant changes in the conditions of spectatorship after World War II—and how the film industry itself sought to redefine those conditions. The technical, the economic, the social, the aesthetic—every aspect of the changes shaping film comes under Belton's scrutiny as he reconstructs the complex history of widescreen cinema and relates this history to mass-produced leisure-time entertainment in the twentie

34 halftones, 15 lin

$35.00 cloth/$18.9



**Harvard University Press** Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-2480

# SCREENING HISTORY

# GORE VIDAL

**"witty and sweepingly disrespectful . . .**
Written versions of history are, in Mr. Vidal's opinion, no more to be trusted than movie versions, and a lot less memorable besides being a lot less fun."
—*The Atlantic*

**"a delight from cover to cover . . .**
A thoroughly enjoyable memoir cum cultural and political analysis."
—Dave Wood,
*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

**"vibrant . . .**
a reminiscence of Mr. Vidal's first 20 years (1925–45), with a dual emphasis on the impact of films and of gossipy Washington politics on boy Gore."
—Michael Kammen,
*New York Times Book Review*

**"a charming, curmudgeonly collection of lectures . . .**
Vidal traces his own history and that of this country through the historical genre films of the '30s and '40s."
—Jane Mendelsohn,
*Village Voice Literary Supplement*

## SCREENING HISTORY

*The William E. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization.*
24 halftones
$14.95 cloth

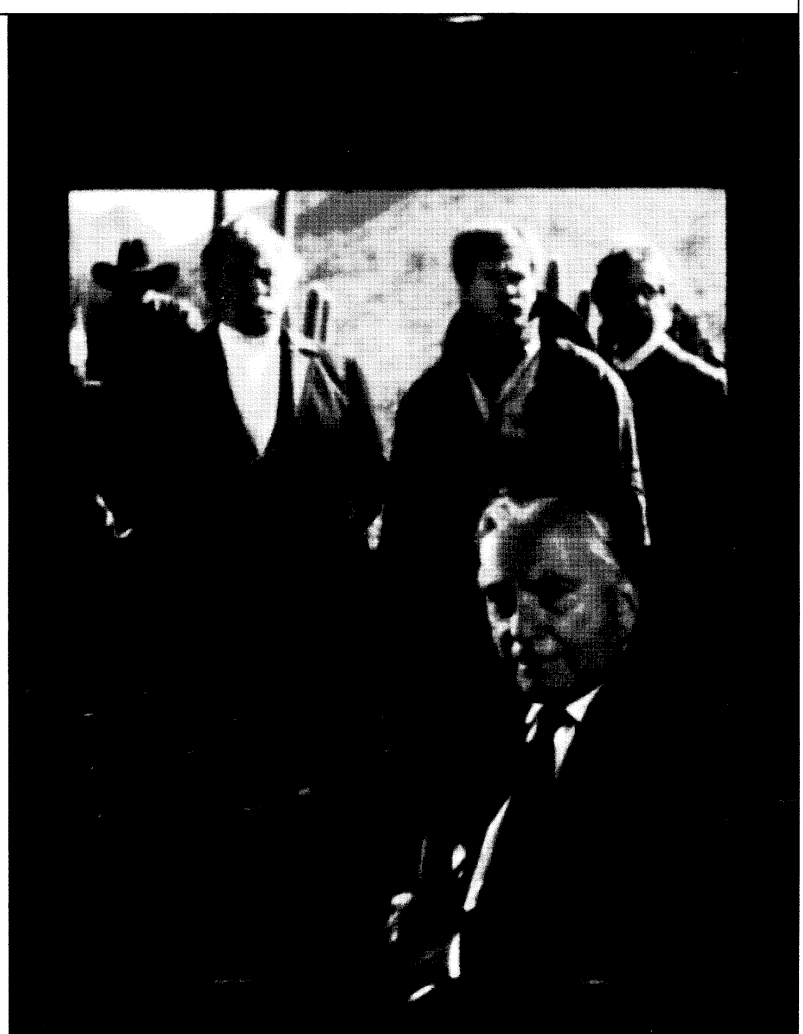


Photo: Richard Howard

Available at bookstores or from

**Harvard University Press**

CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138 (617) 495-2480

Milton Avery Graduate School of the Arts

# BARD COLLEGE

ANNANDALE-ON-HUDSON, NEW YORK 12504 (914) 758-7481

## MASTER OF FINE ARTS

MUSIC • FILM/VIDEO • WRITING • PHOTOGRAPHY • SCULPTURE • PAINTING

Our unusual interdisciplinary approach to work in the arts has changed the nature of graduate education:

- Direct personal one-to-one conferences with artists in your field are the basic means of instruction—no impersonal classes.
- Response and interaction of students and faculty in all the arts.
- Residence requirements are fulfilled during the summer.
- Our intensive sessions lead in three summers to the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

## SUMMER 1993 JUNE 21-AUGUST 13

**Faculty:** **Peggy Ahwesh, Perry Bard, Alan Cote, Lydia Davis, John DiVola, Normandi Ellis, Jean Feinberg, Arthur Gibbons, Regina Granne, Peter Hutton, Ken Irby, Robert Kelly, Ann Lauterbach, Nicholas Maw, Tom McDonough, Tyrone Mitchell, Leslie Scalapino, Stephen Shore, Anne Turyn, Stephen Westfall**

**Recent Participating Artists:** Vito Acconci, Mac Adams, Steven Albert, John Ashbery, Zeke Berman, Charles Bernstein, Mel Chin, Maureen Connor, John Corigliano, Petah Coyne, Susan Crile, Larry Fink, Tom Gunning, Gerry Haggerty, Anne Hamilton, Jane Hammond, Ken Jacobs, Tania Leon, Brad Morrow, Tod Papageorge, Lucio Pozzi, Yvonne Rainer, Archie Rand, Steven Reich, Mia Roosen, Judith Ross, Michael Snow, Arthur Sze, Michael Torke, Joan Tower, John Walker